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# THE IRONSIDES:

A Tale

OF

THE ENGLISH COMMONWEALTH.

"A Spirit passed before me; I beheld  
The Face of Immortality unveiled."

BYRON—AFTER JOB.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON :  
SAUNDERS, OTLEY, & CO., CONDUIT STREET.  
1860.

LONDON :  
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANCERY STREET,  
COVENT GARDEN.



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**OF**  
**THE SECOND VOLUME.**

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# THE IRONSIDES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BLUE BOAR INN.

Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,  
For villany is not without such rheum,  
And he long traded in it, makes it seem  
Like rivers of remorse and innocence.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Saturday that succeeded the memorable Christmas of 1647 was one of the most beautiful days of a very fine season, and Holborn Hill, with its hanging gardens and picturesque hosteleries, though powdered with the livery of early winter, was still animated by the genial rays of a warm December sun. Towards the afternoon, its parting rays fell on many a motley group of wayfarers, mostly farmers, carriers, country labourers, and travellers, who were making preparations for departure after their market duties, in the various public-houses that lined this celebrated thorough-

fare ; and in none were there more noise, cheerfulness, and evidences of prosperity, than in the vast court of the ancient and famous "Blue Boar Inn." Everything indeed, bore a more cheery look than it had done for many a long day ; the conclusion of the Civil War, and the friendship which prevailed between the King and the Army, seeming to open all hearts in spite of the opposition of a perverse and obstinate parliamentary faction. Here, then, were a knot of jolly farmers trying the girths of their stout roadsters, and looking cautiously to the priming of their pistols ; for the roads in the vicinity of the Metropolis had been much infested since the cessation of hostilities by highwaymen whose deeds were the talk of the country side. It had therefore become the custom with our yeomen to travel homewards in parties of six or seven, well armed, and so to escort the light covered cars which carried the groceries and draperies intended for country consumption. There, accordingly, in another corner, might be seen the thrifty housewives who had accompanied their husbands to market, busily engaged in packing up the various purchases, chattering and boasting away at the same time with immense volubility of the excellent bargains they had that day made. Presently came bustling in idle errand boys with the later purchases, and excuses for the delay in transit ; then

ostlers and grooms hurried to and fro, swearing woundily at both man and beast; and the general confusion was completed, by obsequious tapsters speculating on Christmas boxes by affecting to assist officiously their simple and good-natured customers. Meanwhile mine Host, with good humour sparkling in every crevice of his rubicund countenance, went from guest to guest offering to all and each the friendly "Stirrup cup;" saying something courteous about the King here to a Royalist, and something civil about Liberty there to a Republican, with an indifference as to being overheard, which argued a very different state of things to what had existed only a few months ago. All accepted his civilities with a kindliness which reminded one of the good old times, and even the grim Puritans of the City, slackening the corners of their mouths as the foaming tankard of brown October was presented to their fasting appetites, drank cordially "To Country and King."

"Come, haste, Master Giles," said one old farmer to a comrade, "the day is wearing apace, and the 'Wild Riders' are apt to take the evening air somewhat early o' market days."

"Pooh! pooh! Master Hodge," replied the other, "how timid ye beest! No rider, wild or tame, has been seen west of Epping since the squire was met on Michaelmas Eve."

"Ay, ay," said old Hodge, "it's just the old thing! Lock the door when the nag is stolen, and then blame the stars!"

"Well, well," said his friend, smiling, "the car is ready at last, neighbour; so summon our merry men all to take a pull at the 'Stirrup cup' with our host; and then, ho! for the greenwood-tree! Why, where is Roger?" he added, sharply, looking round; "that boy is always out of the way when he is wanted."

But Roger, a lusty young farmer and Master Giles's only child, was on this occasion not very far off, for he was dallying at the bar with Mistress Amy, mine host's pretty daughter; and so absorbed was he in that pleasing occupation as he leant over the forbidden boundary which barred the shrine of the intoxicating goddess, that he was quite unconscious of his father's proximity till roused by a hearty slap from the old man's hand, with the exclamation, "Oh you loiterer! will'st never leave the lasses alone?"

Roger jumped up, all confusion and surprise, and managed to reach his saddle just as Master Boniface approached this group, and called to his daughter to replenish the mighty tankard he carried in his hand. This was soon done, and mine host, raising it (we are bound to acknow-

ledge) for the twentieth time that very day to his lips, drank joyously to the whole party.

"Here is to all your healths, my masters," said he, "and may the good times last and bring peace and plenty to the land!"

"And here's to you, Master Boniface," said Master Giles in return, "and to the May-flower that blooms in your garden," nodding gallantly to Mistress Amy, who all smiles and curtseys was now handing the cup from one to another, in which duty she wickedly passed over poor Roger as if by mistake.

"Ay, ay," said old Hodge, moralizing still, "it's just the old thing! A single ray of sunshine, and we forget the storms that swept the land, and the follies that brought them on our heads!" saying which good Master Hodge took an unusually deep sup at the tankard.

"Why, how now?" retorted Master Giles, "how now, old grumbler? Loyalty is a virtue again, I suppose?"

"No doubt of it," said Boniface, energetically, "and the King shall enjoy his own again!"

Just at this moment the quick ear of mine host heard the clank of spurs as two military figures stalked up the court yard; he thought it prudent therefore to shorten adieus which were becoming

inconveniently enthusiastic; and so bidding the travellers "God speed," he hastened with marked civility to welcome the new comers. They seemed to be non-commissioned officers of the regiment of Ironsides then lying out at Hounslow, and were clad in buff coats, steel caps, and heavy riding-boots, the undress of that celebrated corps, with long straight swords clanking at their heels. The elder of the two was a strongly built, middle-aged man, with rough manly features and grizzled hair, and nothing about him but his martial bearing to fix the attention of strangers; but his companion was a very different personage. He was in the prime of life, very tall and gracefully made, with classical features and finely poised head; while the paleness of a countenance which was lighted by large dark, dreamy eyes and shaded by short jet-black curls clustering low on the forehead, reminded one involuntarily of the antique ideal of manly perfection. Notwithstanding however, these great personal advantages, there was something so cold and cynical in the expression of his face that the eye turned away from it in disappointment. As the farmers passed the strangers on their way out, the elder of the two latter stared at them with an air of recognition in his large grey eyes, mixed with surprise and pleasure; and he continued to watch their movements as they

slowly cleared the court-yard, till aroused from his reverie by a whisper from his comrade.

"Has the post left for Dover?" inquired the elder stranger of Boniface, who stood bowing servile welcome, with his white apron thrown over his arm.

"Not yet, sir," replied our host; "it does not leave our fair city till six o' the hour, and it now wants a good half to that time."

"Good!" muttered his interrogator, glancing at his companion; "all goes well. Let us have a quiet corner, Master Host, and a tankard and pipes, and we will wile away the moments till he comes. Ah!" he added, pointing to a small room which overlooked the gateway, "this is the very thing. Send our refreshments here, Master Host, and delay not, for we would be private."

The refreshments were soon produced, and the strangers lighted their pipes and began to smoke in silence; the younger one maintaining the supercilious quietude which contrasted so strikingly with the restlessness of his older friend. The latter, indeed, seemed of a very excitable temperament, and devoured, as it were, with curiosity: for he bustled about the room, peered out of the window, examined minutely some letters which had been idly carved on the wainscoting, and turned over the furniture inquisitively; and then



taking a long pull at the tankard, he threw himself on a bench with the exclamation,

"Ah, how time passes!"

"Slowly enough, I am sure!" sneered his companion.

"You will hardly believe, Henry," said the first speaker, without noticing the rude comment of his young friend, "that ages ago, before these sad troubles began, I used to frequent this hostelry on my weekly visits to London, and that this is the very room I usually occupied."

"When you lived at Huntingdon, I suppose?" said the indifferent listener, yawning.

"Exactly so; exactly so," replied the other, with increasing eagerness; "I used to come in on market-days with our jolly yeomen, and many a carouse we have had over our bargains. Let me see," he continued, with almost childish simplicity—"let me see; it was the very *last time* I came in I think—yes, I am *sure* it was—that I bought that pretty conceit for little Fan's birthday; and she wore it at the famous mummary you have heard us talk so much about. Ha, ha, ha! There never was such sport seen in the country-side either before or since. Ha, ha, ha! Old Desborough, you know, was clown, and little Fan was the fairy queen; and—and I was Robin Goodfellow! And by the merest accident of

course, I—I poured the hot punch into Master Desborough's boots! Ho, ho, ho! It was rare sport! it was rare sport! Ho, ho, ho, ho! it was rare sport!"

He paused for a few moments, and then added, in a voice of deep emotion,

"But those days are gone, Henry; those days are gone!"

His companion regarded the speaker during this sally with a puzzled look of mixed contempt and admiration; and at length observed (in a civil tone, however),

"If we no longer have the fleeting amusements of the fireside to cheer us, sir, we are at all events sustained by a sense of patriotic sacrifice."

"Umph!" growled the other, as if not altogether satisfied with the exchange—"Umph!" and he took another draught of the brown October.

"Gadzooks!" he again ran on, clinking the tankard down with a jovial air, "I could hardly believe my eyes when I entered the court-yard, for there stood some of my old comrades, as I remember them of old! not a hair changed as I live! And I fancied they looked hard at me too. There was old Master Giles, our neighbour (and a kind neighbour he was, though we differed about those cursed politics), with his cub of a Roger, that I have often licked for stealing our apples! Ha,

ha, ha ! And old Hodge, our country philosopher, as we considered him, is to the fore too, though I had more difficulty in recognising him, as he is somewhat pinched by time. But then *philosophers*, you know, Henry, are bound to be meagre, lest evil tongues should draw conclusions." This was said with a humorous glance at his young friend, who was certainly very spare in his person. The latter took no notice, however, of the sally, and the other rattled on.

"Gadzooks ! Master Giles might be considered one in some senses too, for I never met a man more devoted to the philosopher's stone ; that is to say, to hard coin. What a bargain he drove about poor 'Submission !' Old Giles, you must know, bred him in the Fens, and wanted fifty Jacobuses for him, but I held out and got him for forty ; and a better nag never stept over the heath of Huntingdon. He has carried me into London in three hours, and I was never a light weight. You remember poor 'Submission,' Henry ?"

"Well !" replied his friend, with stern emphasis. "Well ! He died on Marston Moor like a faithful and *unrepining* servant of the Good Cause."

"Ha ! sayest thou ?" exclaimed Cromwell, starting fiercely from his seat (for it was he)—"sayest thou that again ? I tell thee, Henry Ireton, that thy voice ever falls on my ears cold as the sum-

mons of ruthless destiny. For nothing human *could* so constantly urge such unfeeling, uncompromising severity. And what is this senseless lamentation about the Cause? Why I affirm that we *have* done our duty by it, and that it is safe—safe, I say, from everything *but* the fanaticism of its *followers*!”

“And the treachery of the King,” rejoined the other, with his old sneer.

“That has to be established,” replied the general, firmly; “and until it is, your discontent is both factious and unreasonable.”

“But *you* know as well as I do,” persisted Iretton, his dark eyes glowing with virulence, “that no terms *can* be made with this Charles Stuart, for he is not to be trusted. Over and over again he has forfeited his most solemn promises and engagements. And not only as made towards his avowed enemies but, even to the betrayal of his own followers! Look at his conduct towards his truest friends, Strafford, Glamorgan, and others. Look to the contents of his private closet captured by us at Naseby! Didn’t we there find ample confirmation of his deliberate insincerity and premeditated treachery towards ourselves in a thousand instances in his own handwriting? And above even *that* height of infamy, wasn’t there also damning proof of his entire heartlessness

in the sarcastic and cruel reflections he makes to the Queen respecting his own devoted Parliament then sitting at Oxford, and the many gallant gentlemen who were at that very time risking their all in his vile behalf? To trust such a villain again I say amounts to judicial "blindness—nay, to actual insanity!"

"It is impossible to gainsay what thou urgest, Henry, in some respects; and I acknowledge that up to the close of the war the King's conduct was a mass of unmitigated turpitude, and that no amount of punishment could be too severe for such dishonest doings. Still, it is quite as certain that since its conclusion he has turned over a new leaf, and behaved with candour and moderation; and it may be that misfortune and experience have touched and changed a nature which after all has much of good in it. Something must be allowed too for his unwise rearing by a foolish, half-crazy father, and the influence of a vain, fickle, and turbulent woman to whom he is deeply attached. And bad as his public conduct has been, we all know that his private character is unimpeachable; for he is undoubtedly a brave and honourable gentleman, a good husband, and according to his own lights a pious Christian; and I must add (for I have seen it with my own eyes), a kind and tender father. Now surely there are germs of

improvement in such qualities as these? Therefore I cannot persuade myself that such a man would basely betray the arm that has been stretched out to save him. Besides which, just look at the political view of the question. If we push this quarrel to extremity, on what are we to fall back!"

"We will have a Commonwealth!—the only form of Government suitable and worthy of a free and enlightened community!"

"I tell thee, Henry, thou art stark, staring mad on that subject. Now, without entering into the religious and platonic axioms which you so constantly advance—for, though interesting to cultivated and enthusiastic minds, *they* will never influence the masses, depend upon it—I protest that *none* of the conditions necessary to the establishment of a republic exist in these islands. The common people, almost to a man, prefer monarchical institutions; they are attached to them, and with good reason, for under them they have risen far above the level of other nations. They are, moreover, proud of their ancient line of Kings, many of whom were valiant and generous-hearted men; and they quite comprehend, that since the Wars of the Roses, the Crown has been a shield of defence to the people in particular, standing between them and the exactions of the nobles; and, although they are resolute at this time to maintain

their just rights, and especially those relating to conscience, I am satisfied that a republic could not stand in this country after the excitement of the struggle is over. Therefore, as I said before, policy, common sense, and generosity—ay, and even *necessity*, counsel us not to break utterly with this unfortunate, and I trust, repentant Prince.”

“I heed not such worldly arguments,” Ireton replied, rudely and doggedly; “and *I repeat*, that this fellow is *not* to be trusted. He will undermine us, and again become rampant in the land!”

“And *I say*, he *cannot* soar again, even if he would; for his wings are too closely clipt.”

“I tell you, his word is not his bond, and time will show it!”

“Time may, then!” said the general, gruffly, turning away with an angry gesture; and both resumed silence and watchfulness with an increased feeling of dissatisfaction towards each other. But it was easy to see, by the twitching of his hands, the shiftings of his position, and the sudden changes of expression that passed like stormy clouds across his speaking countenance, that an awful struggle was raging in Cromwell’s mind, and that his fiery spirit, stirred by suspense and torn by opposing hopes and passions, was moved to its inmost depths, and straining on the electric wires of ardent imagination more wildly than the gaze hound on

the slip when the quarry's afoot and the view halloo rings merrily round the greenwood tree. Once more he raised, unconsciously as it were, the tankard to his lips, but set it down untasted, with a stern "Pshaw!"

Ireton meanwhile sat calm, cold, and insensible, with his eyes half-shut, and seemingly abstracted from all worldly affairs; occasionally, however, he would raise them, and cast a furtive glance at his companion when the latter was looking in another direction, and then, that peculiar puzzled look of mingled awe, admiration, and contempt would again for an instant light up his noble, but repulsive features.

And so a few minutes, which counted like hours to the watchers, passed slowly away. At length a man was seen approaching, carrying a saddle on his head and a riding-whip in his hand, and he had no sooner entered the vast portals of the hostelry than a gigantic trooper, who had lain concealed round the corner, closed them from the outside.

"He cometh!" exclaimed Cromwell, springing from his seat in terrible excitement as he sighted the intruder. "He cometh, Henry Ireton, and the fate of a King trembles in the balance!" Saying which, he drew his sword with startling energy, and sallied into the court-yard, followed by his companion with a slow and deliberate step.



The new comer appeared to belong to the class who were employed in carrying the Government mails, and such other light documents as might be entrusted to their care by private parties. It was the custom at that period to perform such journeys on horseback, and as the stranger advanced towards the stables with the evident purpose of saddling his horse, Cromwell seized him by the arm, saying, "We arrest thee, friend, in the name of the Council : behold our warrant," exhibiting a document to the astonished prisoner, who protested solemnly that he was innocent of all offence against their Honours.

"That may well be as you say," replied Ireton. "Behave, therefore, discreetly, and no harm will befall you. Follow us."

They led him trembling into a vast stable in which carts, horses, and merchandise were intended to be indiscriminately placed, and which was feebly lighted by horn lanterns, suspended here and there from the rafters. It was now quite empty, as all the usual wayfarers had departed on their various errands ; and its great size and peculiar construction, having but few and very small windows, gave it a gloomy and cavern-like aspect, and made it a very fit locality for a deed of violence.

But the captors did not seem to be actuated by

any animosity towards the mail carrier personally ; for they merely relieved him of the saddle he carried on his head, and then told him to stand aside ; keeping, however, between him and the door.

In great haste they now began to examine the saddle, ripping open its flaps with their daggers ; and very soon a cry from Ireton indicated that he was on the brink of a discovery ; and Cromwell, stooping forward with the utmost eagerness, detected in the depths of the lining the object of their long and anxious search—a small and unimportant-looking letter.

He clutched it with an iron grasp, and was about to tear it instantly open, when Ireton suggested that they should first dismiss their prisoner, and lull his fears and suspicions. Summoning him, therefore, from the background, where he had remained quite out of sight and hearing, Ireton explained to him briefly, that the Council had been informed that letters were sometimes surreptitiously forwarded, *viâ* Dover, in the lining of saddles, to their enemies on the Continent, and had accordingly ordered an investigation ; but that fortunately for him, no proof of such correspondence had been discovered on the present occasion ; and tossing him a silver coin for the damage done to his saddle, he advised him to keep his own secret, and

continue his journey without further apprehension. The poor fellow required no second warning ; so hastily gathering up his harness and donation, he retired with many obeisances.

Ireton, now, with his usual deliberation, took down a lanthorn to enable his friend to read the letter which had caused so much excitement ; and the light had hardly fallen on it when Cromwell exclaimed—

“Great God ! It is, it is the King’s private cipher ! I had it from a sure quarter.”

He tore it open with a trembling hand, made a futile effort to decipher it, and then handed it to Ireton, saying—

“Read thou, Henry, for my brain and sight are swimming !”

Ireton accordingly took the letter, and after a pre-examination, read it aloud in a cold, sneering tone, with the assistance of a key with which they were provided ; taking good care to place the proper emphasis on every telling word and sentence. It was brief and decisive, and ran thus :—

*“To our Queen in France.*

“SWEETHEART,—Respecting our concessions to those saucy knaves, Cromwell and Ireton, we pray thee to have no manner of uneasiness ; for we shall continue, as heretofore, to play the two rebellious

factions the one against the other ; and some who look to have silken garters, shall be fitted in due time with hempen cords.

“Thy Husband and Lover,

“CHARLES.”\*

\* The exact text of the above celebrated letter has not unfortunately descended to posterity, as it was probably kept secret by the Republicans during their dominion for the reasons urged by Cromwell to the Assembly of Military Delegates ; and falling at the Restoration into the hands of the Royalists, better grounds still for concealment came into operation on that side.

*But we have evidence that no impartial mind can for a moment resist*, that the above imaginary transcript does at all events contain the pith and marrow of its perfidious venom ; for independent of a great mass of corroborative matter, such as Cromwell's private expostulation with Ashburnham (as recorded by the latter) about a *certain* secret communication made by the King to the Queen, which he seems to have done without entering into particulars, probably on the impulse of the moment ; Herbert's report of a rumour of the same transaction ; and the singularly interesting account given by Lord Orrery's chaplain of a conversation held between Cromwell and his patron (then Lord Broghill), which was exhumed generations after by Carte from the deceased chaplain's manuscript memoirs—independent, we say, of these weighty testimonies, the great Lord Bolingbroke *himself informed* Alexander Pope the poet, and Richardson the son of the artist, that the second Earl of Oxford (the son of Lord Treasurer Harley) had told him “*that he had seen and held in his hand an original letter which Charles I. wrote to the Queen, in reply to her reproach of having made those villains (Cromwell and Ireton) too great concessions ;*” and *that the King had therein replied*, “*that she should leave him to manage, for that he should know in due time how to deal with the rogues, who instead of silken garters, should be fitted with hempen cords.*”

Now, although every effort has been made to hush up and throw discredit on this transaction by those royal and aristocratic elements which pervade English society, I would respectfully

During the reading of this ominous letter, Cromwell remained perfectly silent; and when it was concluded, he still made no sign or motion, but stood mute and transfixed like one petrified. Ireton, with some curiosity, raised

ask the reader, after he has weighed the above authenticated facts with the additional circumstances, that the Earl of Oxford alluded to was the son of a man who was a minister of England not fifty years after Cromwell's death, and during the reign of Charles's granddaughter; that he himself was, of course, from his position and antecedents, a thorough monarchist; that Bolingbroke was so staunch a partisan of the Stuart family, that he actually suffered attainder in their cause, and changed his religion to please them; that Pope and Richardson were both intense Royalists, and the former a Roman Catholic to boot, and therefore especially inimical to the great Protector—whether any historical event of such extreme delicacy, and one which it was the interest of the actors on both sides to conceal, *could rest on more substantial grounds?*

It may be observed in conclusion, that the account given of this mysterious transaction in the text is derived, *ad literatim*, from the record of a conversation that took place between Cromwell and Lord Broghill in Ireland some years after the King's execution, and which originated in the latter's inquiry, *as to the real reasons of the sudden rupture of the Independent faction with his Majesty*. On which Cromwell related the "Blue Boar episode" precisely as above described, and Lord Broghill requested his chaplain to make a memorandum of the same. It will be seen that the paraphrased version of the letter in the text follows the phraseology ascribed to that document by the Earl of Oxford, who had actually read it, and who held it to be of such importance, that he offered no less a sum than £500 for its possession. The offer was refused by its Royalist proprietor. It is to be feared, therefore, that it is no longer in existence; unless, indeed, it survives among those buried Windsor archives which her most gracious Majesty (*prudently*, perhaps) refused Miss Strickland permission to unearth and bring to the light of day.

the lantern to the general's face, saying complacently—

“Are you satisfied *now*, sir?”

But as the dim and flickering light fell on that stern and rugged countenance, stamped, as it certainly was, by the hand of nature with all those lofty qualities which obtain the homage of mankind—Genius, Ambition, and Unswerving Will—and at that moment convulsed with dire and deadly passion, even the vain and passionless cynic was appalled at its awful expression! He was paler than a corpse, with lips closed like a vice, hands unraised but fiercely clenched, and eyes glaring as it were on some apparition, towards which his person bent menacingly forward. His brows were knit in dark and heavy folds, and every vein and muscle of his forehead were swollen to bursting, and he murmured words of deep and startling import:

“Oh! base, coward heart! and is it so indeed? Ha, fiend! wouldst thou slay him who sought to save thee? Bloody wolf-hound! weavest thou a halter for thy friend!—a shroud for our children!”

Ireton, who was for once surprised out of his philosophic mood, shook the general by the arm, crying in earnest tones,

“For God's sake! speak out your inmost thought,

general, *now or never* ; for this is *the crisis of our destiny* !”

At the sound of his relative's voice, Cromwell started like a man roused from a dreadful dream, and for a moment glared on him with blank and agitated look ; for he had evidently fallen, after his wont when greatly moved, into a species of abstraction or unconsciousness of surrounding objects. Recovering himself, however, by a great effort, he seized his friend's hand, and in whispers hoarse with suppressed emotions, disclosed his dread and unchangeable purpose.

“ *Thou knowest, Henry, above all men, how loth I have been to put my hand to this work ; for I could not—nay, I would not, credit that this Charles Stuart was indeed so base, bloody, and unscrupulous as his enemies have depicted him. And albeit, his insincerity in former times was well known to me, I trusted that the Lord would turn him aside from his evil courses, and bring forth fruit from those better qualities the germs of which I had myself noted in his nature. There is something, too, in this golden bauble which men worship—this sign and symbol of ancient days—that holds back the iron hand of Justice, and bids Retribution herself to pause. For our forefathers in the olden time dwelt beneath its shadow in peace, and did mighty things before the Nations.*

But that time has gone by ! This perfidious man has deliberately worked out his own doom ! And I tell thee, Henry Ireton, as surely as the Lord liveth, *he shall die the death !*"

And so saying, he strode quickly into the courtyard, passed with a rapid step into Holborn, followed by Ireton and their sentinel, and was soon lost in the crowds which still bustled in that busy and populous thoroughfare.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE ASSEMBLY OF MILITARY DELEGATES.

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up  
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

SHAKESPEARE.

A FEW days after the poet's visit to their home gathering, as Harry Thornton was loitering over the comfortable breakfast-table in Hatton Gardens, wrapt in pleasant dreams of domestic happiness and national contentment, a trooper cantered up to the door, and tossing a note to the servant, immediately hurried off again like one who had weighty business in hand. There was nothing peculiar in this incident, as the colonel often received communications in this manner from the camp at Hounslow; but the soldier's demeanour exhibited a good deal more haste than was usual on such occasions. When, therefore, the note was handed to him, his mother and sister watched his countenance with considerable anxiety. The note ran thus—

*"To Colonel Thornton of the — Regt. of Ironsides.*

"In the name of God, greeting.

"Come to us, Harry, at Windsor, and tarry not by the wayside; for verily there is work yet in the vineyard for the just and the valiant.

"Thy friend and commander,

"OLIVER CROMWELL."

Harry Thornton knew his general too well to doubt the urgency of a case which *he* deemed important; and making therefore some courteous excuses for his sudden departure to the ladies of the family, he was in a few minutes galloping out of London. On reaching Windsor, which at that period was a military post of considerable strength and the head-quarters of General Cromwell, he found the Castle guarded with unusual care. All the drawbridges were up, picquets were stationed at detached points, staff officers were moving about actively in different directions, and altogether there was such a stir and bustle as surely indicated the advent of some extraordinary intelligence.

No sooner had the colonel moved up the slopes than he encountered numerous grooms leading to and fro the smoking chargers of various officers of rank belonging to the regiments lying in the villages between the Castle and Hampton Court, who had already preceded him; and on reaching

the fosse and announcing his name, the drawbridge was immediately lowered to allow him to enter, but forthwith raised again, the officer on duty briefly observing, "The Council is sitting in the Great Hall."

Thither accordingly he hastened, and to his great surprise found the Hall occupied by most of the principal officers of the army. They were standing about in groups, discussing eagerly matters that seemed greatly to excite them; and through the buzz of general conversation, all that Harry Thornton could catch was that some serious accident had befallen the King. Near the door stood a remarkable-looking man, who seemed to be taking a strong lead in the discussion. His tall, stately, athletic person was clad in armour, and his dark hair, beard and moustachios were trimmed with military precision; and a fine Roman nose lent dignity to a countenance which was bronzed and scarred with exposure and service. But what added a singular interest to his appearance were large, black, lustrous eyes, beaming with the wild light that gave indeed a clue to his real character. He was talking vehemently to those around him.

"I will lift up my voice even as a sparrow on the housetop," exclaimed the grim warrior in a voice of thunder, "and testify against the man

"Stuart! For he and all his tribe are graceless dogs and not to be trusted!"

"I have been long of that opinion, colonel," replied another officer with a dreadful whine. "The kingdom of the saints cannot co-exist with the dominion of that son of Baal!"

"Gentlemen," broke in Thornton in a state of complete bewilderment, "this is strange language to use towards his Majesty, with whom we are now happily on such good terms. What can it all mean? And what are we met here for so suddenly?"

"Nay," answered the fierce zealot who had first spoken, "what we are met for is beyond my ken; but for my part I am here to do the bidding of the Lord!" and so saying his hand fell quite naturally on the pommel of his long sword.

"In that case," said a humorous-looking personage attired as a civilian, with *nez retroussé*, reddish hair and light grey saucy eyes, "in that case, friend Harrison, we are pretty sure of coming in for hard knocks, as I find the Lord is quite as quarrelsome now as he was in the olden time."

"Henry Marten!" replied Colonel Harrison sternly, "thy speech ever savours of blasphemy; and were I a ruler in Israel I would not be beholden for the sake of the Good Cause itself, to such as thee. The tares should be separated from the

wheat, the corrupt member should be lopt off from the sound body and cast into outer darkness lest the contagion spread—yea! even unto the burning!”

Marten however, no way daunted by this menacing address, was about to commence a joking rejoinder, when Harrison turned on his heel with a gesture of contempt, and stalking to a wooden bench on the other side of the Hall, he drew from his pocket a small Bible and was soon absorbed in its contents.

“But what in the name of patience *has* occurred, Marten?” reiterated Harry Thornton.

“Nay,” replied the other, “I am like yourself, colonel, still in outer darkness; though here come some who profess to enlighten the Gentiles,” he added with a sneer.

At this moment the great doors of the Hall were ceremoniously thrown open, and an officer of very high rank advanced slowly and with a hesitating step towards the expectant groups. They all rose to receive him with much deference; marks of attention which seemed rather to embarrass than please the new comer, who answered their salutations shyly and awkwardly. His features were small, thin, and irregular, and denoted a mixture of peevishness and irresolution which would have been contemptible but for the lambent fires which

glanced around as he occasionally raised his dark, deep-set, downcast eyes. His complexion was sallow, and his jet-black beard and hair were kept unusually short, and had a ragged untidy appearance; and to complete the absence of taste and refinement in his presence, the latter was combed straight down over a forehead already sufficiently mean and lowering. His figure however was tall, upright, wiry, and active, and he was attired in the full costume of a general officer. Cromwell, Ireton, Desborough and others attended on him in a respectful manner, but on reaching the head of the great round table which stood in the middle of the Hall, he made some to-do about taking the state chair which an aide-de-camp had placed for him, and which Cromwell urged him earnestly to occupy. Seating himself at length, his example was followed by the rest of the company. A peculiar pause now ensued, which was eagerly laid hold of by Colonel Harrison to propose prayers for grace on their counsels. A deep hum indicated the assent of the company, and the colonel accordingly prayed aloud in language so exaggerated and incoherent, that nothing but its vehemence and enthusiasm screened the preacher from absolute ridicule. No such feelings however would probably have prevented that martial zealot from prolonging his discourse to an inconvenient length ;

but happily for his hearers he was as amenable to military discipline as he was restive under spiritual, and a sign from Cromwell brought his rhapsody to a termination.

"And now, gentlemen," said Cromwell rising, "it is my painful duty to lay before you, with the sanction of his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief," bowing to the general officer who was presiding, "the circumstances which have brought us so unexpectedly together."

And here we must remark on the extraordinary change there was in Cromwell's manner and language from what they presented in his moments of excitement and conviviality. Throughout his address and the long debate which followed, he was perfectly cool and composed, and used the plainest, most moderate, and most conciliating language; arguing with the wavering in courteous terms, supporting the more daring with conclusive facts, and deferring to the commander-in-chief's irresolution and ill-temper with much patience and respectfulness; and in short managing the conference throughout with tact, ability and determination.

"It is known to you all," he continued, "and I am not ashamed to acknowledge the fact, that my feelings towards the King underwent a great modification when I became personally acquainted

with him after the war had been brought to an honourable conclusion. He appeared to me a man of great parts, understanding, and earnest convictions, who had been misled by false friends and a false training, rather than instigated by innate perversity of disposition ; and of the kindness of his heart I soon had personal and irresistible evidence ; and so I began to consider, whether under all the circumstances of the case, it would not be best to retain him in the kingly office under safe guarantees, rather than risk the advantages we had already obtained by endeavouring to bring about a more thorough change in our political constitution. Such, gentlemen, were the changes which had taken place in my own feelings and in those of many here present, and I believe I may add of the great majority of the army."

"Nay," broke in Harrison furiously, "I enter my testimony against such backsliding. The army as a body were ever utterly opposed to any compromise whatever with the man Stuart, though there be some in high places who have become faint-hearted and look wistfully forward to the flesh-pots of Egypt !"

"I quite comprehend," replied Cromwell smiling, "the allusion of my old friend. There were indeed some grounds for suspecting that his Majesty's courteous manners and dignified sub-



mission to misfortune had wrought deeply on those who were brought nearest to him, and the more so when it became known, that great honours and titles had been offered to our noble general, myself, and others. And although those things were peremptorily declined by us all (we having from the outset determined to receive no rewards except from the hands of our countrymen), yet sooth to say, the soldiery began to look askance at their old commanders, and we marked with grief that our intentions had been misunderstood and that our popularity was waning. Notwithstanding which I still affirm, that there *was* a reasonable prospect of bringing about a just settlement of the differences between the King and his estranged subjects; for his Majesty to all appearances was quite sincere in his desire of giving satisfaction for the past and guarantees for the future; and had over and over again pledged himself to observe and respect those privileges which we had taken up arms to uphold, and which I will make bold to say are the birthright of every human being."

This observation was greeted with universal applause, none joining in the demonstration more decidedly than the President.

"In this happy and promising condition of affairs," continued the general, "and in the midst of negotiations cordially conducted between the

King, the Parliament and the Army, and while his Majesty was living in all honour and friendship and contentment under our protection, a change has taken place in the situation so marvelously strange and sudden, that it would probably have baffled human ingenuity to give it a reasonable interpretation, did we not fortunately for ourselves possess evidence that must at all events convince the most obstinate and prejudiced of our own innocence in its development. And what fell agency, you will ask, has caused the tide of our hopeful expectancy to ebb so suddenly? Verily, it is this: because in the very midst of protestations of friendship and the practice of hospitality, with the tears of seeming sincerity in his eyes and the professions of chivalric sentiment ever on his lips, Charles Stuart has been planning the destruction of those who had generously overlooked his past transgressions and were labouring at great self-sacrifice for his future welfare! Yea! I say it again! with the very kiss of Judas he has endeavoured to betray us!"

"Good Oliver," said the President, a good deal perturbed already, "have you sound warrant for these accusations?"

"Yes, Sir Thomas Fairfax," was the reply; "full, perfect, and damning proof! and here, *here*," holding up a small letter, "is the evidence! But

to resume," he said glancing sharply at the earnest countenances which were now lowering round the Board; "a few days ago there came to us a message from one who shall be *nameless*, but who is well known to many here as a safe and sincere friend, though unable from worldly and politic circumstances to testify the same openly, saying, 'that we were betrayed; that the King was playing fast and loose; and that our doom would be found in a letter which was concealed within a saddle that one, who knew nothing of the same, would be carrying on his head when he entered the Blue Boar Inn, Holborn, between the hours of five and six after meridian on the Saturday succeeding Christmas.' On the receipt of this intelligence Colonel Ireton and myself having donned the accoutrements of private troopers, and taking with us a trusty friend, Adjutant Grimbold, proceeded to the 'Blue Boar' hostelry, and placing our follower outside the gate in an unobserved way with orders to bar the door the moment he you wot of should have entered, we called for cans and pipes and so solaced ourselves. Presently our sentry signalled that the expected fellow was coming, and even then there entered one of low condition carrying a saddle on his head. Adjutant Grimbold instantly barred the gate, and we drawing our swords, arrested the bearer of the saddle, who to

say truth was utterly confounded, but came to be of better cheer when told that no harm would come of it if he kept a still tongue. We then carried the saddle into the stable, and ripping it open with our daggers, therein found this very letter concealed in its folds. I at once recognised the King's private cypher, which we had previously obtained *from the same quarter from whence came our warning*, and applying it in the usual manner, we came at the contents."

"Read! read!" were now the exclamations which resounded on all sides.

"Listen then!" replied Cramwell with a grave and stern air, "*for verily, its words are doom!*"

He read accordingly the letter before recorded, methodically and with only moderate emphasis, and none of that emotion which he had exhibited when it was read to him by Ireton.

It was heard in death-like silence, the members of the Board holding even their breaths during the reading; but at its conclusion they started simultaneously to their feet with flashing eyes and menacing gestures, and for a few minutes the Great Hall rang with the clashing of sabres and armour, and fierce exclamations of anger, horror, and revenge.

No voice was louder in denunciation than Sir Thomas Fairfax's.

“False King!” he cried, “dishonoured gentleman! the hour of retribution is at hand, for mankind will no longer suffer your villanies!”

“Down with Baal!” shouted Harrison in a voice that made the old rafters tremble. “Down with the blood-thirsty tyrant! Let him die the death of a dog!”

“See now what comes of compromising matters of Justice and Conscience!” broke in Ireton in his sneering way. “We well knew before that Charles Stuart was a man not to be trusted; that he was cruel and arbitrary by nature, false and treacherous by education; a keen dissembler and a ruthless despot; and of these things we had numerous instances throughout the war. And yet for our own selfish and party purposes, we screened him from the vengeance which would otherwise have overtaken him long ago, and which we one and all knew in our hearts he most richly merited!”

“Gentlemen,” said Mr. Henry Marten, the person who had given such offence to Colonel Harrison, in a soft melodious voice, “I cannot omit bringing under your notice facts which I have had the honour of laying before the House of Commons on many occasions, but which have not hitherto met with that attention which I for one

always believed they deserved. The whole question I would respectfully urge turns on two points—viz., first, the deserts of the King in his official capacity, and secondly, the reliance to be placed in his professions of penitence. Now, is there a man, I will not say amongst us but amongst any reasoning community, who will deny, that he deserves condign punishment for having deliberately overthrown the ancient Constitution of these realms and endeavoured to govern by his sole will and prerogative, contrary to the laws of the land, the customs of his predecessors, and his own solemn oath made and recorded at his coronation? Has he not imposed heavy burdens and levied onerous taxes in direct defiance of the resolutions of Parliament? Has he not attempted to force Episcopacy down the throats of those who abhor it more than Papacy itself? Has he not through the action of the Star Chamber established by his own ordinance contrary to the rules of Equity, fined, imprisoned, cruelly flagellated and inhumanly maimed divers freeborn natives of these islands without due form of trial? And finally, has he not waged bloody war to the knife against those who resisted those illegal and oppressive measures? There are none, I am satisfied, who could exonerate him from these serious charges, as

they are matters of common notoriety; nor can any pretend that a magistrate (and he is nothing more), is irresponsible in the performance of his functions. Then, as to the point of confidence in professions of reformation, why, you must look entirely to personal character for their real value; and thereon succeeds the inquiry—Is a man who has over and over again betrayed his best and truest friends, likely to keep faith with his deadliest and most dangerous foes? Such an expectancy has seemed to me so preposterous, that I have wondered that any could have entertained it for a single moment. Therefore I am fain to advise, after weighing all these *pros* and *cons* dispassionately, that the opportunity which has presented itself of dealing finally with this vexatious question be not again lost; for depend on it, there will be neither peace nor safety for free England, while Charles Stuart *lives, lives I say*, to perplex, embroil, and betray!”

He spoke with great ease and confidence, like a practised pleader, and placing a marked emphasis on the word “*lives*,” which he reiterated, he turned his eyes full on the face of Cromwell.

That extraordinary man had taken no part either in the demonstration or debate which succeeded the reading of the intercepted letter, but had

rather withdrawn a few paces from his original position near the President, and there stood watching the various speakers with a severe and vigilant aspect.

He was about to come forward at Marten's appealing glance, when he was interrupted by loud cries from Colonels Axtell, Hacker, Whalley, and others, of

"Enough ! enough ! Let the villain die ! Let the tyrant perish !"

Meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief, with the vacillation of purpose for which he was so remarkable in council, began to get exceedingly nervous at the very serious complexion the affair was assuming, though he himself had pointedly led the way to such a conclusion. So after prying into the unfortunate epistle which had caused all this perturbation with a puzzled air, and rising as if to address the meeting, and sitting down again without uttering a word, he turned at last eagerly to Cromwell, who marking his perplexity, had again stationed himself close beside the presidential chair, and said,

"Good Oliver, this is not the King's own handwriting actually ; it is but a cypher. Are you sure, absolutely certain, that there is no evil device in this weighty matter ?"

"Nothing under the sun can be clearer," replied



the other firmly. "For we already possessed the royal cypher, and the writing is evidently in the King's own hand. Besides, as I said before, the preliminary warning came to us from a safe and unimpeachable quarter."

"Then it would be advisable," continued the Commander-in-Chief, "that the name of our informant should be placed before Parliament, with the circumstantial grounds of our proceeding."

"That may hardly be, Sir Thomas," interposed Cromwell; "for in the first place, it would give Charles Stuart, who we know to be a most unscrupulous liar, the opportunity of *sowing dissension amongst us* by declaring, that '*the letter*' is a *forgery got up by the military to destroy him*; an assertion which some might be weak enough to credit. Whereas if *we* keep our own counsel, *he*, though of course well aware of our discovery of his turpitude by the miscarriage of his correspondence with the Queen as well as other sources, must perforce hold this damaging secret fast also. All in fact that is essential is, that we ourselves should be thoroughly satisfied of the King's treachery; and being so, *we can more easily effect our intentions by proceeding against him on general and notorious grounds of public policy*, than by resting our opposition on *personal or party ones which*

*might be misconstrued.* And in the next place a public sifting of this episode would cause great misfortune and in a worldly sense even shame, to our trusty monitor ; a poor return for as long a course of secret though patriotic devotion, as any that has fallen under my observation. But to satisfy your Excellency's too tender but honest scruples, I will confide to you in all honour that name which must *ever be kept back from the world.*"

He stooped forward accordingly and whispered in Fairfax's ear ; who on the instant started, coloured, and balanced himself uneasily in his chair to the great risk of an overturn, and then peevishly exclaimed,

"Deal with the villain as you list !"

"Gentlemen and comrades," said Cromwell, now addressing the meeting generally, "as I believe we are agreed on the main merits of the question which I have had the honour of laying before you, I propose in continuation, that for the good of our Country, the rights of Conscience, the freedom of Citizens, and our *own safety*, we do now and from this time forward *break utterly with the man Charles Stuart* ; reserving however the manner of carrying out our resolution to future discussion and agreement."

This plain and explicit proposition was unani-

mously and earnestly assented to ; and after some further desultory conversation the meeting dispersed ; Colonel Harrison having vainly endeavoured to detain the members for the purposes of thanksgiving and spiritual consolation.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE FALL OF ROYALTY.

O now, for ever,  
Farewell the tranquil mind ! Farewell content !  
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars  
That make ambition virtue ! O farewell !  
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner ; and all quality,  
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war !

SHAKESPEARE.

FROM this time forward, rumours of a very sinister nature began to creep gradually into circulation throughout the country, showing clearly that the machinery of disunion was once more secretly but surely at work, although none could say from whence they sprung, or on what circumstances they were actually based. The old complaints of the King's insincerity which had partially fallen into oblivion, were once more unearthed and brought prominently forward ; his unchangeable bias for intrigue was paraded with new-born acrimony ; and his stubborn faith in the rights divine of royalty proclaimed to be utterly incurable.

And the folly and danger of again trusting a man who was so deeply stained with ingratitude and treachery, was the theme, that again inspired every orator, resounded from every hostelry, and troubled every conventicle. And these portentous signs were soon succeeded by others, equally threatening and significant.

The great officers of the army who had hitherto been so demonstrative in their attentions to the fallen Monarch, began to be more chary in their attendance at Hampton Court ; and the common soldiers seemed to be losing the respect and esteem which they had lately professed for their Sovereign, and subsiding fast into that chronic hatred of his person and office, which had marked their conduct and opinions during the changing fortunes of the war.

Reports of plots and counterplots succeeded each other in admired disorder ; divisions amongst the military leaders themselves, were balanced by positive assurances of distrust between them and the House of Commons ; while it was as boldly asserted, that these two parties were ready notwithstanding their own differences to combine against the King, as he on his side was represented, as playing one against the other and deliberately betraying both. Secret meetings of the leading officers were known to have been held ; and the soldiery, fol-

lowing the example of their betters, had inaugurated a mimic parliament under the style of the "Council of Adjutants," to which the most violent of their comrades were elected by general suffrage.

Many of these military delegates belonged to the sect of "Fifth Monarchy Men," a violent and unreasonable offshoot of the "Independents;" from whom they had seceded in contempt for very much the same reasons that the latter had withdrawn from the great Puritan party ;—namely, a desire for the more rapid and earnest development of those democratic and religious theories which had given a healthy impulse to the national movement in the beginning, but which were now obtaining that mastery over the human mind, which all powers that have been unwisely pent up are sure in the end to reach.

Their present condition indeed exhibited all the features of dangerous monomania ; for these fanatics had firmly persuaded themselves, that they were the elect of heaven, and especially appointed to control and instruct all other denominations of Christianity, and shape them into one holy and happy family—of course according to their own interpretation of what was proper and agreeable : and that the millennium of saints, which it seems was expected in those days with about as much reason

as it is in our own, was approaching for their particular benefit, and would last a thousand years on earth previous to the dissolution of Universal Nature: and all these amazing pretensions they justified by free and easy quotations from the Revelations, and other incomprehensible portions of the Holy Scriptures.

It will easily be understood therefore, that it had tried all the talent, temper, and energy of their commanders to induce these zealots at the termination of hostilities, to enter into a compromise with royalty; and they now seized with avidity the *permitted* opportunity of breaking utterly with that hated principle; harassing the Parliament with unruly petitions; exciting the populace with inflammatory harangues; and demanding in accents that carried dismay to the hearts of all sober and loyal men, that justice should be done on the great malefactor, as they now boldly designated his Majesty the King: for it appeared, that the destruction of the Crown and aristocracy was a necessary step in the way of preparation, to the establishment of their halcyon and saintly Commonwealth.

From all these signs and symptoms, Charles inferred truly enough, that his meditated treachery had been discovered; but with that conceit and confidence in himself, which were marked features

in his character, he believed that he might yet succeed in dividing and corrupting those he could neither deceive, coerce, nor intimidate. He therefore redoubled his attentions to the principal men of the two factions which at that moment divided the power of the State and balanced each other's prestige; lavishing on them all those courtesies which no one was more able to distribute gracefully, and pressing on their acceptance distinctions, which few have had the moral courage and patriotism to resist.

Such an adept indeed was he in Macchiavellian arts, that at an earlier stage of these proceedings he had even assumed an air of wounded friendship, complaining to Cromwell that he had not yet done him the pleasure of introducing him to his wife and daughters, and that he took the omission unkindly.

And when these demonstrations failed in again cajoling his lost friends and diverting them from the dread purpose which the King instinctively felt in his conscience they were secretly but surely approaching, he appealed finally to their sense of honour, as being in their custody on parole; professing to be in much alarm of outrage to his personal dignity and even of assassination. But all would not do. His wiles were met by cold denials, stern repulses, and counter machinations:



and reading his fate and exposure in their averted and contemptuous looks, he resolved to make his escape from a situation which had become as disagreeable to his custodians as it was painful and humiliating to himself. Accordingly it was on a dark night in the month of January, 1648, that a man might be seen mounted on one horse and holding another by the bridle, ensconced in some shrubbery near the water-gate of Hampton Court. He had not been in hiding long, when a small door at the end of the Palace nearest the river was opened softly, and a gentleman attired in riding boots and wrapped in a heavy horseman's cloak, glided towards the watcher, and scrambling through a small fence which divided the plaisance from the park, he whispered as he approached,

"Jack, is it you?"

"Yes, your Majesty," said the other in the same subdued tone, throwing the rein of the led horse to the inquirer; "and Legg and Berkley wait in the outer thicket."

"Ah!" said the King in a cheerful tone, patting the animal on the neck as he mounted, "I see you have succeeded in securing the services of our old favourite 'Bayard,' and surely that is a good omen for all knight errants!"

He mounted with much agility, and then added:—

"And now, Jack, I will be your guide, as every lane and bye-path in these parts are as well known to me as yonder terraces; for in my earlier and happier days we used to frequent them much in hawking. So follow softly, and mind 'mum's' the word."\*

He took the lead, at first at a gentle pace, through the parklands towards Kingston bridge, being joined presently by two other gentlemen; but after crossing the river at that point, they clapt spurs to their horses, and proceeded briskly through Coombe woods, the King threading its dark alleys and glades with the instinct of a veteran sportsman. An hour's hard riding carried them through the Surrey hills, and then shaping their course for Hampshire, and continuing their journey with unabated vigour, they found themselves towards morning in the vicinity of a large manor-house, close to the little seaport of Christchurch. A friend was on the look-out for them in that quarter, and in a few minutes more the fugitive King was comfortably ensconced in an arm-chair beside the library fire, at Titchfield, the seat of Lord Southampton. The noble host was himself absent; but the honours of his mansion were right loyally performed by his aged mother, the Dowager Countess.

\* The *actual* date of the King's flight from Hampton Court was the 11th of November, 1647.

"You see us, madam," said the King, "once more a wanderer in our own land; but still full of hope, and, God be praised! in hearty health."

"Your Majesty's indomitable spirit," replied the courteous dame, "puts mettle into the hearts of your faithful subjects, many of whom are willing and ready to draw together in these parts, and make head against the base-born minions who stand in better men's shoes."

"Nay, that may not be at present, brave friend," said Charles, "for there is not the remotest probability of success. The traitors are in full possession, and press on the State with so heavy and warlike a hand, that it would be sheer madness to attempt to dislodge them by force. But, as we say in bonny Scotland, 'bide a wee.' Meanwhile we purpose, as thou knowest, to seek refuge with our brother of France. What news then, good Countess, of our little *Water Witch*?"

"She was seen off Bembridge point, your Majesty, last evening, and seemed to be hieing to her old cruising-ground at the back of the island, for the night, and we expect her to be bearing up towards the Needles with the sun; but there are so many ships of war lying out at Spithead, that we must be circumspect in our movements."

"Have no fear, have no fear, kind hostess,"

replied the King gaily, "for, as our old friend Will Shakespeare says :—

"There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would."

However, these hopes also were doomed to be disappointed, for the report of the King's flight was not long in reaching the seaports, and with it came such strict injunctions to intercept the fugitive, that the whole channel was very soon swarming with cruisers, and the situation of the little vessel which had been dispatched from Holland to rescue his Majesty became so critical, that she was obliged to sheer off to St. Malo.

In this desperate plight, Charles, who possessed a singular knowledge of the private history of families, bethought him, that, as "surrender" was merely a matter of time, it would be a good stroke of policy if he could make it to one who might, from his antecedents, become interested in his safety. He therefore determined to open negotiations with the governor of the Isle of Wight, and endeavour to obtain some sort of guarantee from him of personal safety and dignified treatment. The officer in question was Colonel Robert Hammond, a gentleman as remarkable for his moderate and upright character as for his connexion with the family of Hampden, for he was married to the only daughter of that great and lamented patriot,

the "Pater Patriæ" as he was fondly termed, of that stirring age. He too had joined the parliamentary ranks at the breaking out of hostilities, and had conducted himself with such valour and probity, that, though disinclined to extreme measures against the Royalists, he was appointed by an unanimous vote of the House of Commons to the important post above-mentioned. Charles accordingly dispatched Mr. Ashburnham and Sir John Berkeley to the Isle of Wight; and on opening gradually to the governor their mission, those gentlemen were very much chagrined to learn from him distinctly that he was not authorised to grant any terms whatever, and that all he could take upon himself to promise was security and respectful treatment *while the King was in his own charge*; but that he was the soldier of the Parliament and his duty was obedience to their orders, and that therefore, his Majesty's ultimate appeal must be to them. The messengers were now in a dilemma which they had not the wit to parry, and, as is common enough in such situations, they came to disagreement between themselves, the more especially from Berkeley having incautiously revealed, that his Majesty was hard by; and so Ashburnham, from nervous anxiety lest the King should fall into more unscrupulous hands still, with the probability of being tracked on their return by

the governor's orderlies, confided to Colonel Hammond the place of his Majesty's concealment, and requested him to accompany them there, and discuss the question with the wandering monarch himself. The governor accepted the offer readily, and with one aide-de-camp in his suite, followed the messengers to the main land. As soon as the party had reached Titchfield House, Ashburnham, leaving the others downstairs, went up to the King, and told him without circumlocution that Colonel Hammond was below.

The intelligence startled the unfortunate monarch out of his wonted propriety, and he exclaimed in an agony of passion—

“Oh, Jack, thou hast ruined me! for I am by this means made fast from stirring!” which roused Ashburnham's remorse to such a pitch, that he proposed to fall suddenly on the governor and his subaltern and assassinate them on the spot.

The King, however, to his honour, would not listen to this wild and wicked proposal; and after some further hesitation surrendered herself to Colonel Hammond, receiving from him personally, the same assurances as those propounded in the first instance to Ashburnham; and was finally lodged in Carisbrook Castle.

The report of the King's capture gave general

satisfaction to the people at large, as many had feared that his escape from Hampton Court might be followed by outbreaks of the Cavalier faction, useless to themselves politically speaking, and sure to lead to the destruction of men whose valour and loyalty had, after all, enlisted the popular sympathies to a great extent. At the same time, the House of Commons, very few of whom were aware of the extent of the King's perfidy, thought to make use of the false step he had taken, and so to impose on him conditions which would curtail his power of doing mischief in future.

These conditions were embodied in four stringent Bills which were forwarded for signature to Carisbrook; but the King, after much procrastination, refused to agree to them with his usual obstinacy and hardihood; and thus gave the leaders of the opposition *who were behind the scenes*, the opportunity of striking the terrible blow which they had carefully and secretly prepared. The whole question of confidence in the King was immediately brought before Parliament, and earnestly argued in a very full house, Cromwell taking the lead in the discussion, and denouncing boldly and explicitly, Charles's insincerity as *unmitigated and incurable*; and the debate terminated in an unanimous vote, "declining all further addresses to his Majesty."

This important decision received shortly a significant confirmation ; for a General Council of officers met once more at Windsor Castle, and resolved, "That the King should be prosecuted for his life as a criminal person."

The publication of these resolutions was followed by outbreaks in various parts of the country, which deferred, though they could not prevent, the object so sternly announced ; the Cavaliers, with a gallantry and devotion worthy of a better cause, seeming bent on making one last, self-sacrificing effort for their treacherous and undeserving master. The Earl of Norwich raised commotions in Kent, which obtained some importance as connected with a partial mutiny of the fleet, then lying at the Nore and in the Downs. Berwick was surprised by Sir Marmaduke Langdale, and Carlisle by Sir Philip Musgrave, two distinguished Royalist officers, and the Duke of Hamilton advanced at the head of the Scottish army into the English Marches ; and thus the embers of civil strife, which appeared happily subsiding, were once more fanned into flame for the succour of a man, who had in turn made use of and betrayed every party just as it suited his personal policy. Even during his sojourn at Carisbrook, Charles, with untiring craft, set on foot intrigues with all manner of men. He entangled the Scotch especially, in spite of their



national wariness, in negotiations which sowed the seeds of unappeasable enmity between them and the English and caused eventually the dispersion of their armies, and the total subjugation of their ancient kingdom. Knowing the dogmatic weakness of his northern subjects on matters of religious ceremonial, he held out as a decoy to their Commissioners, the Earls of Loudon, Lanrick, and Lauderdale, "that he would establish Presbyterianism in England," and other concessions which even his constant justifier, Clarendon, brands as "most scandalous and derogatory to the honour and interest of the English nation;" the Scotch, on their part, binding themselves "to invade England, destroy the English armies and Parliament, and restore his Majesty to his kingly prerogatives."

Again, we find him holding out to the religious enthusiasts who at that period swarmed under the Parliamentary standards, the sop that he would "suspend Episcopacy for three years;" and immediately afterwards, with unblushing effrontery, he is discovered conspiring with certain sections of the Parliament against the army during its absence on service. While, at the same time, he was ever deluding the loyal gentlemen who still clung to his fortunes, by protestations of unswerving fidelity to the Established Church, in the maintenance of

which the aristocracy were doubly interested, first as a matter of conscience, and secondly as bearing heavily on the settlement of their estates, which were derived in a great measure from the spoils of the Roman hierarchy. But the hour of retribution was fast approaching : and a severe reckoning was to be demanded of the perfidious monarch, by those great and daring spirits who were equal to the task of meting out justice, even to "the Lord's anointed."

The moment it had become obvious that the insurrection was assuming important dimensions, the Commander-in-Chief determined to march in person to suppress it, and forthwith began to make the needful preparations for a campaign with a vigour and promptitude, that seemed inexplicable to all but those who had watched and shared in his victorious career. The shy, peevish, inert, vacillating councillor, was transformed at the approach of war into a cool, active, and far-seeing commander, full of zeal for the service and devotion to the good cause. The first in the field and the last to retire from office ; when not arranging the concentration of troops, the collection of hospital and commissariat stores, and the formation of depots and magazines, he was to be found immersed in correspondence with the committees of the House of Commons about treasury warrants, bills

of discharge, enlistment, and promotion, and all the tiresome minutiae of the desk : all these duties being carried on with a calmness and good-humour very much opposed to his natural temperament and ordinary way of life.

He advised, too, with his lieutenants with a perfect absence of that jealousy which is the besetting weakness of chief command, and even found time to chat cheerfully with his men, a matter of no small exertion to one naturally so taciturn ; and in short, before the government could make up its mind to denude London of the required complement of troops, Sir Thomas Fairfax had reported himself ready to march at an hour's notice with a well-appointed field force, having made at the same time due provision for the safety of the capital during the absence of head-quarters.

Meanwhile another *corps d'armée* had been organised by a kindred spirit for service against the northern insurgents, and very shortly General Cromwell entered on his first Scottish campaign ; and as "The Ironsides" served always under the latter officer, our hero had again to bid a soldier's sudden farewell to weeping friends and homely scenes. The result however was not long doubtful, for nothing that was then known in the profession of arms could resist the skill and vigour of

the parliamentary leaders, and the fervid enthusiasm of their men, supported as these important conditions to success were by a discipline as severe as it was unexampled in European annals. In spite therefore of the chivalric spirit with which the Royalists fought, they were again completely beaten at all points, and reduced to submission in a sharp, decisive, and brilliant campaign.

As soon as the victorious armies had returned to the Metropolis, the attention of the government was turned to the King's affairs, and the prosecution of their designs against his person and office.

During the latter period of his confinement at Carisbrook, Charles had become altogether an altered man, but the alteration was not of a favourable complexion. Hitherto, whatever might have been his public conduct, his private bearing and behaviour had been that of a high-bred gentleman; he had made no unmeaning complaints against those whose duty compelled them to restrain his liberty to a certain extent; always professed himself satisfied with the treatment he personally received, and conversed courteously at all times with those round about him; and, indeed, carried himself with a dignified serenity, which won the respect of those even who were politically opposed to his pretensions. Soured however by the discovery of his underhand machinations, which

he felt had lowered him in public estimation, and disheartened by the final overthrow of his Jesuitical policy, he had latterly abandoned himself to unmanly moroseness and virulent vituperation. He neglected his dress and person, and allowed his beard and hair to remain untrimmed, declaring untruly that he was restricted in his wardrobe and attendance ; he refused his wine and food, protesting unfairly that they were not of the description he had been accustomed to ; and he repelled the civilities of his custodians with cold and newborn contempt, which was as undeserved as it was ungrateful ; and finally he gave way so completely to the natural arbitrariness of his disposition that he forgot what was due to himself, and actually on one occasion, went 'the length of striking Colonel Hammond the governor of Carisbrook Castle with his cane on a very slight provocation. As might have been expected, the blow was returned on the instant by the high-spirited soldier, and the unfortunate monarch had the mortification of thus bringing on himself the last indignity to which a gentleman can be exposed. This painful episode was succeeded by a desperate attempt at escape, which terminated in Charles's transfer for better security to Hurst Castle, a lonely fortification on a sandbank that juts out into the Solent from the coast of Hampshire ; and

orders were issued in due time to escort him thence to the Metropolis to undergo his trial.

And so one raw foggy morning in the month of January 1649, a party of horse was drawn up on the bleak and desolate beach facing Hurst Castle, watching a boat which was making its way slowly to the shore, and their choice equipments and soldier-like bearing evinced that they formed the *élite* of the parliamentary forces. They were superbly mounted and divided into two descriptions of cavalry, one-third being cuirassiers in plate armour, and the remainder light dragoons. Their commander, an officer of noble presence, was a little in advance of his men, and by his side stood a groom holding a hack, saddled and bridled, which showed all the qualities of a safe roadster though obviously deficient in speed. As soon as the boat touched the strand, a sad-looking gentleman stepped on shore. He was clad in the faded costume of the Cavaliers; his beard was untrimmed, his long hair uncombed, and there was a general appearance of negligence and indifference about his dress and person. Still, his lofty bearing, courteous manners, haughty, refined, and beautiful features, indicated at once the highest rank and breeding, and a mind unsubdued by the storms of adversity.

"Who," said he to one of the boatmen, "is that gallant-looking soldier?" pointing to the leader of

the escort, who was now advancing towards him with his head uncovered.

"That is Colonel Harrison, your Majesty," replied the boatman.

"He is a proper man," said the King, cheerfully, for he was always partial to handsome military-looking men, "and I have heard, a worthy soldier. Good morning, fair sir," he continued, addressing Harrison courteously; "like true veterans, you are stirring betimes."

"We have been appointed to conduct your Majesty to London," the colonel replied, bowing respectfully, "and we desire your commands as to the division of the journey, whether it shall be accomplished in two or three days."

"Nay," said the King, smiling, "few things are left to our choice in these rough times, and even in this matter this little nag," patting the neck of the hack, "will have two words to our one."

"Your Majesty will find him a good and steady roadster," replied the other.

"Come on, then," said the King, gaily, mounting and clapping spurs to his horse.

As he did so, videttes from the light horse sprang some three hundred yards to the front of the cavalcade, the cuirassiers wheeled on its flanks, the remainder of the dragoons brought up the rear, and Colonel Harrison rode by the King's side; and the

quick eye of the latter saw at a glance that those nearest his person held their petronels in their hands ready for immediate use.

And so they journeyed, Charles endeavouring to draw the colonel into familiar conversation in order to discover the real intentions of the Parliamentarians towards himself (for nothing *could* persuade him that they would really bring him to trial in the face of the world), and at the same time casting about in his mind some mode of escape from his vigilant and experienced guards. Harrison, however, civilly but firmly parried these efforts, confining himself to the courteous performance of his official duties, and nothing of importance occurring on the first day's journey, the travellers rested that night at Winchester.

The next morning they continued their journey in the same formal manner, Charles resuming his friendly advances to the commander of his escort more pointedly still, and mixing with his familiarities constant complaints of his hack ; till at length the distance between them began to diminish, and Harrison who possessed very little penetration and was an easy-going man in the main, though a ferocious fanatic in religion and politics, was thrown completely off his guard. Accordingly, as they neared Bagshot Heath, the King expressed so earnest a desire to take his mid-day meal at his



sporting lodge in that locality which he had much affected in former days, and which was then occupied by his attached friends Lord and Lady Newburgh, that the colonel determined to strain a point in his favour, and hazard the responsibility of a meeting which was opposed to the strict letter of his instructions. He took the precaution however, of sending on some light horse to scour the woods round the park and to search the lodge itself lest they should fall into an ambuscade, and fortunate it was for his commission that he did so, as will be seen hereafter. The King was profuse and seemingly sincere in his thanks, and his sanguine temperament again overflowing with hope, he became cheerful and complimentary, praising the discipline and equipments of his escort, and especially admiring the colonel's charger, which he had discovered in conversation was an old campaigner, and a great favourite of its simple-minded master's.

"As to this sorry brute," said he, kicking his own hack peevishly, "it absorbs all our skill to keep him from reducing us to the last extremity and making us a raree show to your brave fellows, colonel; but my Lord Newburgh must be much changed if he cannot remove this difficulty, for we are minded that he was as well known for his horseflesh as for his hospitality."

"If your Majesty is bent on it," replied Harri-

son, who was completely hoodwinked, "I will endeavour to get a nag over from Bagshot, though it appears to me that our roadster has done his work fairly enough."

"Thanks, good colonel, thanks; we will talk it over with my lord at dinner."

But in doing so, the King discovered that an accident had upset the cunning plan on which two days' manœuvring had been exhausted; for it appears a scheme had been laid between him and his host that the latter should have a certain horse, celebrated for his great speed and endurance, ready to exchange for the hack, about which his Majesty had made so many undeserving complaints; and that during the bustle of mounting again after dinner, Charles should clap spurs to his racer, and endeavour to escape from his escort, relays having been also stationed at various arranged points. Fortune however interfered in an unexpected manner, and herself spitefully overthrew the last of the many chances which the King had lost, partly through mismanagement, and partly through over confidence in his own resources; for in shoeing the horse alluded to the day previously, he was lamed, and most likely from the nervousness attending over care; and although Lord Newburgh offered another one in his stead, either from want of confidence in its ability for the work, or superstition,

or the great danger attendant on the step, the King resolved finally to abandon the plan altogether ; and so took a sorrowful farewell of his loyal and attached hosts, expressing a presentiment at parting that he should never see them again ; not, as he haughtily declared, that he feared his enemies proceeding against him in the way of justice, but rather secretly by assassination. These observations were overheard by Harrison, who was so much hurt and offended by them, that he took an opportunity after the journey had been resumed to speak his mind very plainly to the King on the subject.

“ You seem, sir, to think,” he said “ that there exists an intention of assassinating your Majesty ; but you need not entertain any such imagination or apprehension ; for the Parliament of England has too much honour and justice to cherish so foul an intention. Be assured therefore, that whatever the Parliament resolve to do, will be very public and in the way of justice, and to which the world will be witness, and will never endure a thought of secret violence.”

“ Your honourable reflections, colonel,” replied the King, “ have, we are fain to say, in one part bettered yourself and your employers in our estimation ; but in another we fall again into variance, inasmuch as we cannot persuade ourselves that the

Parliament will *dare* to produce their Anointed King in the sight of the people under any form of trial whatever !”

“Time will clear up that point, sir,” the martial zealot answered, smiling darkly and subsiding again into grave reserve.

That night Charles slept for the last time in his ancient castle of Windsor, and on the following day he was conducted to London, and lodged in Sir Robert Cotton’s house, in Palace Yard, on the banks of the Thames. There he was confided to the custody of Colonel Tomlinson, who was provided with an especial warrant for the occasion from the Parliament, having been selected for this onerous duty on account of the gentleness of his manners, the humanity of his disposition, and the firmness with which he not only carried out the instructions of his superiors, but enforced order and obedience amongst those placed under his command ; and thirty veteran officers under Colonel Hacker attended on his Majesty night and day as his life-guard ; while the mansion itself was surrounded by a full regiment of infantry.

## CHAPTER IV.

## DUTY.

I come from my rest to him I love best,  
That he may be happy, and I may be blest.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a light cloud by the moon—  
'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—  
If, by the time its vapoury sail  
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,  
Thy heart within thee is not changed,  
Then God and man are both avenged ;  
Dark will thy doom be, darker still  
Thine immortality of ill.

BYRON.

AFTER the military operations last detailed, Harry Thornton returned to London, and continued to reside with his family in Hatton Gardens throughout the eventful period of the King's trial ; and solemn as was the occasion to all reflecting minds, that awful ordeal had obtained paramount importance in our hero's, inasmuch as he had been appointed by the Parliament a member of the High Court of Justice, before which the fallen monarch was summoned to answer for his misdeeds and misgovernment.

To his honour however, he did not evade the responsibility of the office ; for though full of sadness at the consequences to which it pointed, he believed that such conscientious burdens did not fall on frail humanity as mere matters of chance, carrying no moral significance ; but were rather imposed by Providence as tests of faith, from which it would be sinful and unmanly to shrink.

He therefore resolved, after communing silently with his own heart, to accept in defiance of all selfish and worldly considerations, the onerous duty which had been placed upon him, and to perform it to the best of his ability, with firmness and impartiality, as a Christian, a patriot, and a gentleman.

In this determination he was much encouraged by his old master John Milton, who not only coincided fervently in his views, but shortly after laid the whole question boldly before the literary world in a work styled, "*Defensio pro Populo Anglicano.*" Sir Jaspar too, with the downright honesty of his character concurred with his son and gave him his hearty countenance.

"It is clear to my understanding," said the old knight, "that the King is a heartless and ungrateful villain, as well as a treacherous tyrant, and is therefore doubly deserving of death ; in fact both necessity and justice demand his condemnation,

for it would be sheer madness to leave the power of destroying others in such unscrupulous hands."

On the other side, his dear sister Nelly and his kind-hearted mother, with the unvarying tenderness of woman's nature, could not reconcile themselves to such severe measures, and pleaded hard for the King's life; dwelling ever on his private character, which was undoubtedly estimable, and on the misery which his execution would bring on his wife and helpless children.

But a still harder struggle commenced in the young soldier's mind, when it appeared that both his betrothed and her father looked on his conduct with the greatest displeasure.

Lord Hazelbeece indeed, from the cessation of hostilities, had been advocating with all his force a return to constitutional government; which he maintained could only be accomplished by the restoration of the royal authority based on popular privileges. Nor would he admit that guarantees could not be found sufficiently powerful to restrain Charles's habitual insincerity and reactionary tendencies. The earl, in fact, with many other noblemen and gentlemen of property, had embarked gallantly in the contest against despotism with the patriotic view of securing for their fellow-subjects a reasonable share of political liberty, and an entire emancipation from ecclesiastical restraints;

but without the smallest desire of changing the form of government or of subverting the reigning dynasty ; and he therefore beheld with the utmost apprehension the rise of sects that threatened both with entire destruction.

When, therefore, the trial of the King was decided upon, the earl animadverted on that measure with great severity both in public and private, joining the Presbyterians in the Lower House in their opposition to the Military and Independent factions ; and it was with a throbbing heart Harry Thornton learnt from the beautiful lips of the Lady Edith herself, that she completely shared her father's feelings and opinions on that all-engrossing subject.

A coolness therefore, began imperceptibly to grow up between the two families, which was greatly increased by an argument which unfortunately took place between old Sir Jasper and the earl, one day after dinner, during which the former, who had already drained a cup or two of good canary, made some uncivil reflections about " turn-coats," remarks which the earl resented by quitting the house abruptly.

All this was threatening enough, certainly ; a small modicum of hope, however, will suffice for a lover, and Harry, therefore, believed that these clouds would clear away after awhile ; but in truth,



notwithstanding the long and affectionate intimacy of a lifetime, he did not quite understand the lofty nature of his betrothed. Nor is this to be wondered at, for though we will never admit that domestic familiarity breeds according to the proverb, contempt, yet certainly it blinds us to the higher traits of character; and the instances of the depreciation in which great minds have been held during their earlier and untried days by those nearest to them, are so numerous as almost to establish a rule. And so it was now. Nursed in all the luxury and refinement that wealth and rank can obtain, idolized by her father, her friends, and her dependents, not unconscious of her beauty and talents, and surrounded by the incense which such combinations must ever command, the greater qualities which formed the foundation of the Lady Edith's character, remained unmarked and partially undeveloped.

Her early love for Harry Thornton no doubt had some weight in eliminating the seed which nature had sown, for nothing is so elevating as an honourable passion; but they rested primarily on a disposition formed for the receipt of all good and great impressions, and wanted only opportunity to bring forth worthy and generous fruits. When therefore the Civil Wars first broke out, none surpassed her in enthusiasm for the cause of freedom and conscience, for she felt and acknowledged its justice

from the bottom of her soul ; and as far as her woman's tenderness would permit, she urged resistance at all risks and consequences ; and with her own fair hands, (as we have recorded) trembling the while between fears for her young hero and the ruling sense of duty, worked the scarf of blue and red which graced the breast of the volunteer of Thornton Hall.

In all this however, there was not merely enthusiasm, for that principle *alone* will often betray its votary into error, but there was also, a clear appreciation and conviction of right ; and so, as no suffering would have sufficed to pall her resolution while the struggle continued, when it was brought to a successful termination she conscientiously considered that the nation ought to be satisfied with the privileges which it had originally claimed, and not ungenerously insist on concessions at variance with the object for which the majority had taken up arms.

Towards the King personally, she had never felt much animosity ; indeed, there were portions of his character which she admired greatly ; and though loathing his insincerity, she was inclined to attribute it in a great measure to his defective and peculiar education, which had led him to believe himself absolved from those moral obligations in a contest with subjects, which he would certainly

have acknowledged under other conditions ; and even in the particular instance of the " Intercepted Letter," she looked upon it as the desperate act of a man who held, (and it must be granted with good reason) that he had been reduced to bondage by unfair means ; to wit, the turpitude of his Scottish subjects in selling him to his enemies, when bound by every tie of honour and humanity to defend him to the uttermost. Nor would she acknowledge for an instant that a King could be proceeded against capitally excepting for deeds of personal cruelty, violence and murder ; none of which things could be laid to Charles's door ; for what he had done, had been done solely for the support of his official prerogative according to ancient precedent in Council, and maintained sword-in-hand manfully in the field.

It was in this frame of mind that the Lady Edith learnt that her lover's name had appeared in the published list of members of the High Court of Justice ; and addressing her father, who had handed the document to her with a deep sigh, for he was much attached to Harry Thornton, she observed in a broken voice,

" Father ! I am not surprised at the intelligence ; and I have been praying for many nights that I might have strength vouchsafed me to do my duty should it come to this sorrowful pass ;

and I have obtained it, praise be unto God; and this very day I will win back Harry from that gloomy path, or—or—resign him for ever!”

“Sweet pet!” replied the earl, kissing her fondly, “Harry’s heart must be harder than mine if he can resist your supplication.”

“I know not whether I shall succeed,” continued the lady, with a slight shudder, “for there is something in Harry Thornton’s soul, and it was that mysterious influence which first awed and then attracted my youthful fancy, that seems to elevate him at times above human fears and affections!”

“We must nevertheless put a brave face on it, child, for it is indeed a final appeal! I would rather perish than that he should say you nay! for though I love him better than father ever loved son, yet—yet—I could never, never, fold to my heart! (he turned deadly pale) the King’s——”

“Hush, father!” said his daughter in the utmost agitation, placing her trembling hand on his mouth, “breathe not that dread epithet! I will hasten to him! Often has Harry vowed allegiance to my slightest wish, and oh! he cannot, cannot refuse me, now. But suspense is madness!”

“I will bring round the coach, darling; be yet hopeful!” so saying, the earl left the room hastily.

In a little while afterwards, a stately coach drew

up at the well-known house in Hatton Gardens, a lady stepped out, and ere she could reach it the door of the mansion opened, and Mistress Nelly came forward to give kindly welcome.

Sympathy is the truest and quickest of interpreters, and in a single glance each gentle heart read the other's tribulation.

Lady Edith saw in Mistress Nelly's pale thin cheeks and hysterical movements, the trail of the canker-worm that feedeth on secret sorrow; and Nelly read in her friend's flushed forehead and feverish hand, the fire that precedes desolation.

"Oh, Nelly!" said the visitor at once, "this morning I have heard of Harry's appointment to that fearful office, and I must see him instantly! alone! alone! that I may win him back to reason and humanity."

"God give you success, Edith! but neither I, or his mother, can move him to change. And for my part, so wedded am I to misfortune that I look ever to reverses."

"My poor Nelly," said the Lady Edith, trying hard to conceal her own agitation, "disappointment has clouded your judgment, or you could never for an instant doubt Harry's faith, or—or, *my* influence."

She spoke bravely, assuming an air of confidence which was contradicted flatly by the tremulousness

of her voice and the increasing paleness of her features, and as if unable to wait a moment longer she added in hurried tones,

"Where is he, Nelly? Where is he?"

"He is alone in the library;" replied her friend, "I peeped in a little while back and saw he was reading the Bible."

"A happy omen!" exclaimed the visitor, running upstairs, "for religion and humanity *must* go together."

Harry Thornton was sitting wrapt in meditation in the old-fashioned library chair, with his hand on the gospel, from which he had been reading; his fine features were full of sadness, and sometimes in his agitation he would hide them in the palms of his hands, and sometimes with an impatient gesture he would turn back his long brown hair off his forehead and look upwards as if appealing against his unmerited destiny, and sometimes a tear would rise in his clear hazel eyes and fall unheeded on the holy page.

There was a gentle tap at the library door; a light form glided through its deep embrasure, and a voice, sweet as the whisper of maternal affection, murmured forth its mission of love and charity—

"I have come to you, Harry Thornton, that *your* honour and *my* happiness may be preserved!"

Our hero started with surprise and delight ; and well he might ; for never was holy anchorite roused from his dream of devotion by so fair a vision : though it would require the imagination of a poet and the pencil of inspiration itself, to do justice to the charms that dazzled the eyes of the soldier patriot, and made his heart heave with tenderness and admiration.

In her haste, the Lady Edith had taken off her velvet hat so carelessly that the fillet which confined her silken hair had broken, and it had descended in flowing curls over her long, fair, swan-like throat, and far down her sloping shoulders ; forming indeed, an appropriate framework for features which surpassed in contour the purest models of classic times. Her face was a perfect oval, and her forehead might by some have been considered rather too high, but it was radiant with lofty expression, as her features were generally speaking, with gentle feminine emotions ; and the exquisite Greek nose, long, well-defined and slightly arched eyebrows, and large, brilliant, dove-like eyes of the deepest violet, shaded by lashes a thought darker than her hair, harmonised well with smiling delicately chiselled lips, beyond which gleamed teeth like Orient pearls, a small rounded dimpled chin, and a complexion in which the tints of the wild-rose faded softly away into the lily.

These divine specimens of womanly perfection, were moreover enveloped in showers of glossy ringlets of an auburn so rare and lovely, that it seemed at every motion as if the sunbeam slept enamoured amongst their golden folds ; and supported by a tall elegant form, beautifully proportioned and enriched with budding bust, long slender waist, and fairy hands and feet ; making up indeed in their glowing entirety, a galaxy of resistless attractions, which despite the warnings of age, the dictum of philosophy, the protests of honour, and the precepts of religion itself, will ever be worshipped by man, envied by woman, and coveted by the angels themselves !

Harry Thornton sprang forward to receive his fair and blushing visitor, and conducted her with gallant courtesy to a settee, and then, kissing her hand respectfully, he replied—

“ In no hand, dearest Edith, would I leave my honour so willingly as in this little one.”

“ Ah ! so you say, Harry, in your untried affection ; but when you hear the terms and particulars of my petition you may cavil at performance. But I will not surprise you into a pledge, for I feel that the subject is too solemn to be decided idly.”

Her manner changed, and became so sad and grave, that Thornton began to be moved by uneasy presentiments.



'After a short silence, during which she kept her eyes fixed on the floor, she raised them suddenly full of tears to his, and exclaimed in broken accents—

"Oh, Harry! Harry! I have learnt—nay—with my own eyes I have seen, your name on the list of that fearful court. Can it be—can it *indeed* be that you are deaf to all our entreaties and all our reasonings, and persist still in your awful determination?"

"None other, sweet love," he replied, "is consistent with that honour which you above all others ought, and I am sure do, prize so highly."

"Say not so!—say not so! for neither honour or duty demands such a sacrifice. How can honour require the destruction of the unfortunate? How can duty counsel relentless vengeance? Oh, Harry!—dear Harry! I cannot, nay, I *will not* believe, unless it cometh from his own lips, that the hero—yes! I will say so in spite of maiden scruples—whom I first idolized with girlish feelings and then loved with matured respect and affection, who was—nay *is*, is *still*! I am *sure*, I am *certain*—the very essence of all that is good and gentle, great and chivalric, could stoop to so fell, so cowardly a deed! Let me see—let me see," she ran on, and rising from her seat in her pretty enthusiasm, she leant over him and turning

back his long brown hair from his forehead with inexpressible tenderness, she continued—

“Let me look into your eyes my own, my dearest Harry, and there read the manly repudiation: for I would as lieve doubt the purity of yonder blue skies, as their true and honest expression!”

She peered wistfully into his eyes and on his troubled brow.

“Ah!” she sighed, “care has already dimmed their brightness; but here, God be praised, cometh the harbinger of future hope!”

And so indeed as she spoke, a tear rose in his large expressive hazel eyes, and surging boldly over in defiance of his manhood, went on its way to swell the ever flowing stream of human misery.

Harry Thornton seemed indeed distressed beyond all measure between passionate love and a strong sense of duty: he essayed twice to speak but articulation failed, and with a motion of despair he seized her hands and bowing his head, pressed them to his eyes.

“Ha!” exclaimed the lady in wild alarm, “you are silent! Speak Harry! speak to me, or I shall go mad!”

“Oh, Edith! pride and darling of my heart!” he answered sorrowfully, “you know there is nothing

in my power, nothing on earth ! that I would refuse to your simplest wish, but—but—one sacred principle. It was *you* indeed that first planted that glorious lesson in my heart, and nurtured its growth by your dear praises : and will you now tear it up by the roots, making me at once unworthy of your love, and depriving me for ever of my own self-respect ?”

“Nay, Harry, you speak in enigmas : what principle do I urge you to surrender ?”

“The principle of patriotic duty !” was the fervent and firm reply ; “the purest of *all human principles*. By which we have trampled tyranny into the dust, freed the consciences of our suffering brethren from ecclesiastical oppression, and raised our country to be a beacon of hope to all the nations of the earth !”

“It is true, Harry, that those glorious things have been done, and none have gone beyond me in sincere admiration of them. But what I point to, in no way infringes on your patriotism, for surely you will admit, that the race is run, and the prize won ; why then stain a noble triumph with judicial blood ?”

“Because the Lesson and Example would not be complete without it ; and also, because not only Justice, but Necessity requires it.”

“Lesson !” cried the beautiful fiancée, her eyes

gleaming like stars. "Example! To strew the head that is bowed in desolation with ashes—where is your chivalry? Justice! To impose its forms and deny its claims, for this poor King was originally surrendered on terms by the base Scotchman—where is your honour? Necessity! To slay the helpless prisoner lest *his* poor efforts should peril the dominion of the victor—where is your common sense?"

"I tell you, Edith, that your gentle heart misleads you in weighing the King's claims to consideration and his powers of doing further mischief. Over and over again has he sown distrust through camp and council, and lit up the flames of civil war in many quarters merely to gratify his own vile and selfish ambition; for no one knows better than he does that his cause is lost, and that it is simply offering up victims to the sword and scaffold to urge continued resistance. And have we not the most positive proof of his deliberate and cold-blooded intention to cut us off to a man whenever fortune places us in his power?"

"Your argument, Harry, savours of sophistry, for in the same breath you acknowledge the King's weakness and parade your fears of his power. Oh, Harry! Harry! the day was, when your voice would have been surely raised in behalf of weeping humanity; and it would be so still," she added

bitterly, "were it not for the marvellous influence of that dark and towering spirit whose leading you blindly follow!"

"Nay, Edith," replied Thornton, much hurt at her reflections on Cromwell, whom he regarded with a species of idolatry; "say nought against him! Whatever may be *my* shortcomings, *his* motives are purer, as well as loftier, than those of common minds; and his noble and kindly disposition is acknowledged even by his enemies."

"I grant you all that; and also, if you will, that his great actions and vast abilities are patent to the world. But they who stand aloof during a contest are the best able to weigh the merits of the competitors, and," she continued with increasing heat, "my woman's wit tells me that Cromwell's aspirations are tainted with uncontrollable ambition, and a fanaticism as cruel as it is unreasonable!"

"Not so! Not so, by heavens!" cried the Colonel, highly offended; "self-sacrifice is his ruling characteristic, and disinterestedness amounts in him almost to a failing; and to my certain knowledge, at this very time he has refused the command-in-chief of all our armies, and induced Fairfax, by earnest remonstrance and entreaty, to retain that high office."

"Just to make a tool of him as he is doing of you!" exclaimed the Lady Edith, deeply wounded

at her lover's obduracy. "Be it so, then! And yet believe me, Harry, that none will weep your fall more truly than the poor heart whose love you have rejected for the leading of dark ambition and crooked policy!"

"Say rather, dearest, adored Edith, if it must so be!" he replied, with a choking voice; "from a sacred sense of duty!"

So mournful, so sincere was the expression of Harry Thornton's voice and features; so religiously did he seem impelled by the principle he had evoked in the contemplated sacrifice, that it touched the lofty imagination of his betrothed to the quick, and obliterated for a time the disappointment natural to woman's mind in such a situation.

Her beautiful face lighted up once more with generous enthusiasm; and as she gazed with tender admiration on her chivalrous lover, it was easy to see that at that moment she loved and respected him more for his firm, gentle, and dutiful resistance, than she could have done even for entire submission to her entreaties.

He seemed instantaneously to catch the change of expression in his mistress's features, and advanced towards her in haste, saying,

"But why, sweetest, should State affairs come between our true and long-trying love?"

"It cannot be! it cannot be!" cried the lady

in the utmost agitation, and stepping back at the same time in confusion as if fearing her own resolution ; “ for I have pledged my word to my father to break off with you, if you are obdurate ! Oh, Harry Thornton, Harry Thornton ! wring this black drop from your heart, or—or—we meet no more ! ”

And wringing her hands, she turned suddenly, and fled from the room with the pathetic exclamation, “ Woe’s me ; woe’s me ! ”

“ But, darling ! Hear me, beloved !— ” he called aloud, following her rapidly to the door. It was too late : her light step was heard far down the staircase.

He darted back to the library window which looked towards the street, tore it open, and pushed aside the solid iron bar which prevented his leaning out with such violence, that it bent and quivered in his grasp like an aspen rod.

She was flitting through the grey courtyard.

“ Sweetheart ! ” he cried, in a voice of agony ; “ Oh, Edith, Edith ! one word—one only word more ! ”

But she disappeared through the gloomy portal without any sign of relent, and presently the wheels of the heavy family coach were heard rolling slowly away.

With despairing eagerness Harry Thornton strained out of the lattice to watch its progress :

soon it turned towards Lincoln's Inn Fields, and at that instant he caught sight of the Lady Edith's beautiful face looking up at the library window : it was paler than drifting snow, and bathed in tears ; their eyes met, and she drew hastily back ; and then, in a delirium of grief which only those gentle hearts can appreciate who have once truly loved, our hero cast himself down on the settee of the bay window, and buried his face in his hands. . . . And so he lingered on for many an hour, cold, despairing, and motionless. . . . The afternoon had passed away, the evening had come, and the moonbeam was sleeping on the library floor, when a lady stole into the room on tiptoe, and tripping to his side, placed her hand kindly on his shoulder.

"Hal," she whispered, softly, "how chill you are. Do you sleep ? 'Tis late, and supper is being served."

He raised his face with a ghastly smile, and so wan and haggard was its expression, that the lady recoiled in affright, but quickly added in endearing tones :—

"Nay, dearest brother, think not of it so seriously. All will be well again, for she loves you truly ; and 'True Love' "—she paused with a deep sigh—" 'True Love' never changes."

The voice of kindness thawed the frozen foun-



tains of the heart, and burst the dark spell that held him speechless. He clasped her in his arms, placed her little form on his knee, and with all the simple abandonment of a child wept aloud on her bosom, ejaculating in the midst of broken sobs:—

“Ah! Nelly, you are more considerate towards me in *my* misery than I was towards you in *yours*!”

“Not so, Hal,” she replied, caressing him; “you were all that poor Nelly could expect; for mine, alas! was a passion, not only unfortunate, but indiscreet.”

“But, sweet pet!” he replied, kissing her fondly in return, “your misfortune was even less deserved than mine.”

“That balm, brother, we may I am sure both conscientiously lay claim to; and then, have we not our own, old, changeless affection left?” continued Mistress Nelly valiantly, trying hard to conceal a rebellious tear. “We must now, dearest Hal, be all and all to each other as in former days, and *I* will hope and pray for you, and *you* for poor Nelly.”

“True, true, my pet,” said our hero more cheerfully; “it would be both sinful and unmanly to give up all hope. And that reminds me, that I have learnt that Ralph Sedley at all events maintains the generous devotion of his character; for he has been the very first to volunteer his services

to the King during his trial. But perhaps," he added, playfully pulling her pretty ringlets, "I ought not to mention that subject?"

Mistress Nelly, as far as we have been able to learn, in no way assented to that very prudent and worldly proposition, leaning we apprehend, if we are to judge by actions, to the opposite view of the question; for, though she blushed and tossed her head, she kissed her brother with a smiling lip.

And then they talked of their return to their old home, which was appointed for the ensuing summer, and their happy pursuits in former times, before care, and passion, and experience had dispersed the glowing and innocent dreams of youth; and in this manner, by a kindly interchange of sympathy, these two deserving beings soothed each other's disappointments. And when the servant came to announce supper, the brother and sister rose to join the family circle with minds relieved, hands warmly clasped, and hearts yet more fondly united.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE TRIAL.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude ;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
Thou dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot ;  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remembered not.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE tide of Opposition, which had so long threatened the unreasonable and aggravating principle of Hereditary Right, had at length hurtled over all those barriers with which Custom, King-Craft, Selfishness, Sophistry, and Superstition had surrounded it, and was flowing rapidly midst the wreck of many a time-honoured tradition to its melancholy but inevitable destination.

In regular sequence to the resolutions passed at

the military councils at Windsor, the House of Commons after having been judiciously purged of Episcopalian turncoats and Presbyterian time-servers, voted unanimously under the pressure of public opinion as expressed in petitions from the common council of London, the borough of Southwark, the towns of York, Newcastle, Hull, the County of Oxford, the grand jury of Somerset, and other influential bodies,—

“That, by the fundamental law of the land, it  
“is treason for the King of England for the time  
“being, to levy war against the Parliament and  
“the kingdom :

“That the people are the origin of all just  
“power :

“That the House of Commons being chosen by  
“and representing the people, are the supreme  
“power in the nation :

“And, that whatsoever is enacted or declared  
“for law by the Commons hath the force of law  
“and the people are concluded thereby, though  
“the consent of the King and Peers be not had  
“thereto.”

In accordance with which authority the House proceeded to erect “A High Court of Justice” for the Trial of the King, and appointed 135 of the leading men of the age members thereof; any thirty of whom were authorized to carry out the

Ordination of Parliament. Thomas Bradshaw, serjeant-at-law, one of the most eminent lawyers of the day, and the representative of an ancient and substantial Saxon family, was named "Lord President of the Court," and John Lisle and William Say, both scions of noble houses, were constituted his assistants ; and Dr. Dorislaus, Mr. Aske, Mr. Steel, and Mr. Cook, all distinguished members of the English bar, were nominated counsel for the kingdom of England, and directed to prosecute the charge against his Majesty ; the three former being invested with the authority of attorneys-general, and the latter with that of solicitor.

The commander-in-chief, Lord Fairfax, was at the same time commanded to place sufficient guards under the orders of the Commissioners, to enable them to maintain the authority and independence of their jurisdiction, and Colonel Tichbourne to make preparations, that the trial might be conducted in a manner becoming the greatness of the occasion. Finally, on the 9th of January 1649, Dendy, serjeant-at-arms to the House of Commons, riding in full panoply with the mace on his shoulder, into the middle of Westminster Hall during the sitting of the Court of Chancery, made solemn proclamation of the approaching trial of Charles Stuart, King of England, midst flourish of trumpets and beating of drums ; stating that the

said appeal would be made in an open court, and inviting all freeborn Englishmen to countenance the proceedings with their presence; and this announcement was repeated with the same ceremonies, at Cheapside and the Old Exchange.

Notwithstanding those ominous preparations, it was almost impossible to convince the King that his enemies were really determined to bring him to a judicial trial; and when no further doubt remained on that point, he took it into his head from the boundless importance which he attached to the royal office and person, that they would not dare, at all events, to proceed to a capital conviction.

So completely had these impressions taken hold of his obstinate and self-sufficient disposition, that by sheer force of so willing the matter, they had extended themselves in the teeth of overwhelming evidence pointing to different conclusions to the few friends who still lingered around him, inducing them as well as himself to view the proceedings of the government with haughty and supercilious indifference, and thus neglect making application for the intercession of foreign Powers and other precautionary steps of a like nature, until the tide of fortune had flowed past the ebbing point of hope.

However, we may reasonably infer that some portion of this imperturbability proceeded from

Charles's belief that he could always evade personal consequences by abdicating in favour of one of his children ; and this supposition is much strengthened by his later observations on the trial.

All doubts about the primary question were at length removed, by Colonel Tomlinson informing the King on the 19th of January, that on the following day at noon it would be his duty to conduct his Majesty to Westminster to meet his Judges.

Charles received the intelligence with an easy air, but prepared himself to meet the crisis with unusual attention. Much against his wont of late, he rose early on the morning of the 20th and spent some time at his toilette, trimming his hair and beard after the mode of the period, arraying himself with care in his best apparel, and displaying as in former times the jewelled badge of St. George, of which he possessed a very beautiful specimen. He then made a hasty repast, conversing meanwhile with his attendants very cheerfully about his affairs, and making many disparaging reflections on the low-bred fellows who thought to browbeat him with high-sounding commissions, which had neither legal, moral, or prescriptive foundation. After which he began to be impatient for the return of the messenger he had sent in search of a gentleman learned in constitutional law, whose opinion and advice he desired.

In good time the messenger returned, and was introduced to the royal closet ; and it proved to be our old acquaintance Ralph Sedley, who with the ruling gallantry of his character had come forward at this desperate phase of his old master's fortunes, and volunteered his services in any capacity in which they might be required.

The King coloured, and looked vexed at seeing him return alone.

"We had hoped, Sedley," he said, "that there was some loyalty left at the English bar, but it seems we have been mistaken once more."

"Perhaps your Majesty may qualify that opinion when Mr. Hailes's explanation has been heard. For he desires me to say in reply to your Majesty's interrogation, that any appearance of consenting and giving legal countenance to yonder commission by pleading, would be injudicious and useless ; inasmuch as the High Court of Justice as it is termed is not only without any warrant in law, human or divine, but from its nature and constitution, the members of such courts act invariably on foregone conclusions. He therefore advises humbly, that your Majesty should deny its jurisdiction and refuse to plead. And as he considers, that it will be more seemly that such a decision should have the appearance of coming spontaneously from your Majesty's own royalty than on advice of others, Mr.



Hailes has not waited on your Majesty in person : but if your Majesty thinks this recommendation unsuitable to the exigencies of the case, he will be too happy like a faithful subject and an honest man, to adopt any other course that the King may suggest."

"We did him wrong, Sedley," said Charles, a good deal affected, "as we fear we have unwittingly done to many others, God forgive us. But we like his sturdy advice ; it jumps with our own humour and is in accordance with our royal estate, and so we will act. And in good time here cometh our courteous gaoler to conduct us to this mushroom court."

There was a knock at the door, and Colonel Tomlinson, a tall military-looking man with grave melancholy features entered, and deferentially informed the King it was time to start ; and a sedan chair having been provided for his accommodation, Charles was conveyed in it between files of infantry to Westminster, accompanied by his own attendants and a guard of thirty-two officers commanded by Colonel Hacker, holding partisans in their hands.

St. Stephen's, then as now, the largest and loftiest Hall in the world unsupported by pillars, had been adapted with considerable taste for the impending ceremony.

At the south end a series of forms covered with red drapery, rising one over the other and extend-

ing quite across from side to side, had been elevated on a platform for the accommodation of the judges, who sat in four rows.

The centre of the first row was occupied by the Lord High President and his coadjutors, and just above the middle of the back or fourth one was displayed the Achievement of the Commonwealth of England.

It was an emblazoned Shield, divided into two parts, which were respectively ornamented with the Red Cross of St. George and the Harp of Erin ; and on either side of it sat Oliver Cromwell and Henry Marten, the most eminent representatives of the military and civil sections of the community, as Supporters of the Escutcheon.

Immediately in front of the judges, but some steps beneath them, a large oval table covered with green cloth was stretched out and spread with books and documents, at which sat Andrew Broughton and John Phelps, the clerks of the court ; on it also lay the Sword of State and the Mace of the House of Commons ; and exactly facing the judgment seat on its opposite side, a handsome carved oak chair and footstool adorned with crimson velvet was placed for the prisoner.

Although there had not been much crowding in the streets, the body of the Hall which had been divided into two equal portions with a central

passage between, the one for the military and the other for the civilians, and the galleries which ran nearly all round the building, were filled to suffocation, as were the lobbies and outer porches.

There was nothing unusual in the costume of the judges ; those amongst them who belonged to the military profession wore their undress uniforms and steel caps, and the rest their ordinary habits and high crowned felt hats ; excepting that Sergeant Bradshaw, as President of the Court, was distinguished by a red mantle and broad brimmed beaver, and his coadjutors, Lisle and Say, by the robes at that time worn by counsel.

These latter arrangements however, though detracting perhaps from pictorial effect, made the persons of the Commissioners more easily recognisable ; and so disproved the assertions of the King's friends, that they consisted entirely of low-bred adventurers. Nothing indeed could have less foundation in truth, for the persons nominated members of the High Court of Justice were in all respects gentlemen of consideration ; consisting in fact of three peers of the realm, three generals of the army, twenty-two baronets and knights, three sergeants-at-law, five barristers, three aldermen of London, thirty-four colonels, the principal members of the House of Commons, some citizens of distinction, and various country gentlemen of landed

estate who had never before taken an active part in politics. And though many of those appointed were absent from various causes, only sixty-six Commissioners actually sitting in judgment, two out of the three peers, viz. Lords Grey and Mounson, were present, as well as seven baronets and knights, viz., Sir John Danvers, Sir Thomas Mau-leverer, Sir John Bouchier, Sir Hardress Waller, Sir William Constable, Sir Michael Livesey, and Sir Gregory Norton ; and it should be borne in mind that titles were much more uncommon in the seventeenth century and that members of the lower house were then more usually country gentlemen of property, than they are now ; and that the House of Commons from which the majority of the Commissioners were selected, was the same which had been elected preceding the Civil War, *and was notoriously composed almost entirely of the representatives of the territorial interest.*

In short, though the reflection was never before hazarded, we will make bold to affirm, that Charles I. was not dethroned as Royalist writers would have us believe, by plebeian factions ; but principally by that section of the kingdom which is now less favourably known as *the landed interest* ; though some of its members (more we believe from feelings of personal compassion and humanity than any-

thing else), declined participating in the last decisive and necessary step.

The proceedings commenced by the Marshal of the Court reading aloud the Ordinance of Parliament constituting the High Court of Justice, for the trial of Charles Stuart, King of England, and calling over the names of the judges.

The first called was "Thomas Bradshaw, sergeant-at-law," who duly answering; the next was "Thomas, Lord Fairfax, Commander-in-Chief of the Army;" to which no answer being made, the marshal summoned him a second time, when a voice answered,

"He has more wit than to be here!"

This unexpected interruption caused some embarrassment, which being overcome, the Marshal resumed and completed his office, and the Lord President ordered the prisoner to be placed at the Bar of the Court.

In obedience to this order, the Sergeant-at-arms proceeded to the grand entrance to receive and introduce the King who had just arrived, and although the spectacle which met Charles's view at that moment was enough to try the strongest nerves, he exhibited neither hesitation or uneasiness.

Descending from his sedan he advanced with dignity up the centre of the Hall, and casting a

stern glance on the silent judges and keeping his head covered in a marked manner, he seated himself in the chair appointed for him with the bearing of a monarch ascending a throne; while Sir Thomas Herbert and his other attendants placed themselves behind their master, the Counsel for the Prosecution on his right hand, and Colonel Tomlinson beyond them again with his sword sheathed and reversed.

No manifestation of anger or disrespect followed the King's act of discourtesy to the Court, but it was responded to by the Judges remaining covered also.

Presently the King rose again, and turning his back on the Court, gazed long and earnestly down the vast Hall, first at the grave soldiery who stood motionless like mail-clad statues, and then at the excited and waving spectators. Having reseated himself, the Lord President informed him in solemn and befitting language, "that the Commons of England being sensible of the calamities brought on the Nation and of the innocent blood that had been shed, which being fixed on him as the chief author, had determined to make inquisition thereon; and according to the debt they owed to God, to Justice, and the Kingdom, and in the exercise of the fundamental power and trust reposed in them by the People, had resolved to

bring him to Trial and Judgment. They had therefore constituted the Court before which he was now brought; and he would in due course hear the Charge read; and then the Court would proceed according to Justice."

Mr. Solicitor-General Cook then rose, and was about to address the Court, when the King who desired to be heard and could reach that official from his chair of state, stretched out his arm and placed his walking-staff on his shoulder in a very authoritative way, saying,

"By your leave, sir."

The law officer hesitated what to do, when the Lord President, addressing the prisoner politely, observed,

"By *your* leave, sir," and motioned to the Solicitor-General to proceed with his duty.

The latter resumed, and exhibiting on behalf of the People of England a charge of High Treason and other crimes against Charles Stuart, King of England, prayed that the charge might be received and read.

Silence being accordingly proclaimed in the usual manner, the Lord President commanded the Clerk of Arraignment to read aloud the aforesaid charges; but that official had hardly commenced doing so, when the King rudely interrupted him, saying with much haughtiness,

"We desire, sir, to make some observations"

"You shall be heard, sir, in your turn ;" replied Bradshaw drily, "but I cannot permit the appointed routine of these proceedings to be interrupted."

The Clerk of Arraighs then in the midst of breathless silence, stated aloud the Charge and Impeachment. It ran thus—

"That, Charles Stuart had been admitted  
"King of England, and trusted with a limited  
"power to govern according to law : And by his  
"oath and office was pledged to use that power for  
"the good and benefit of the People,

"But that he had out of a wicked design to  
"erect to himself an illimited and tyrannical  
"power and overthrow the rights and liberties of  
"the People, traitorously levied war against the  
"present Parliament and the People therein re-  
"presented."

After this Charge, the Indictment went on in the usual formal manner to enumerate and explain some of the overt acts of the prisoner, viz.—

"His first appearance at York with a guard :  
"His setting up his standard at Nottingham :  
"The days of the month and year in which the  
"battle of Edgehill and all the other battles in  
"which he was personally engaged were fought, in  
"which battles he had caused and procured many



“ thousands of the freeborn people of this Nation  
“ to be slain :

“ Then, after all his forces had been defeated  
“ and himself become a prisoner, he had again in  
“ that very year, broken faith and caused many  
“ insurrections to be made in England, and given  
“ a commission to the Prince his son to raise a  
“ new war against the Parliament ; whereby many  
“ who were in their service and trusted by them,  
“ had revolted, broken their trust, and betaken  
“ themselves to the service of the Prince against  
“ the Parliament and People :

“ That he had been accordingly, the Author and  
“ Contriver of all those cruel, bloody, and unnatural  
“ wars ; and was therein guilty of all the treasons,  
“ murders, rapines, burnings, spoils, desolation,  
“ damage, and mischief to the Nation which had  
“ been committed in the said wars or occasioned  
“ thereby :

“ And, that he was therefore impeached for the  
“ said Crimes and Treasons as a Traitor, Murderer,  
“ Tyrant, and public Implacable Enemy to the  
“ Commonwealth, on behalf of *all* the good People  
“ of England.”

“ No !” cried the same mysterious voice, which  
had before startled the Court with shrill defiance,  
“ nor the hundredth part of them !”

This second interruption caused the utmost con-

fusion, and was very nearly leading to more serious consequences ; for Colonel Axtell the officer commanding the Guard, a man of a fiery disposition, declared that he would order his men to fire into the gallery from whence the voice evidently proceeded, unless the interrupter was indicated and instantly expelled.

The menace had the desired effect, and a woman was brought forth, but being recognised by the irritated soldiery as Lady Fairfax, the wife of their respected General-in-Chief, she was taken back to her residence without any rebuke, beyond a significant hope that she would keep her house for a few days for her health's sake.

This lady was a daughter and co-heir of Lord Vere of Tilbury, and having been bred in Holland in Calvinistic principles, she had out of hatred to the Episcopal church, used all her influence over her husband in the beginning of the troubles, to induce him to join the Parliamentary side, as it *then* represented the Presbyterian interest ; pretending indeed throughout the war, the utmost love of freedom, and exhibiting unusual rancour against the Royalists. No sooner however, had the Presbyterian influence paled before the sterner enthusiasm of the Independent or Republican faction, than she began to discover an unexpected tenderness about the royal person and prerogative ;

and so coming forward as above related, completed the political extinction of her honest, valiant, but vacillating husband, by persuading him to absent himself from a duty which he had freely and deliberately accepted.

Order having once more been restored, the Clerk of Arraighs continued the reading of the Indictment, as follows :—

“ And it was accordingly prayed, That he, Charles Stuart, King of England, be put to answer all the aforesaid particulars to the end. that such an Examination, Trial, and Judgment might be had thereupon, as should be agreeable to Justice.”

The King, who had been much amused at the interruption which had taken place through Lady Fairfax's new-born zeal, listened notwithstanding to the Indictment with attention, occasionally rising to mark its effect on the audience ; until the clerk arrived at the words, “ Tyrant, Traitor, and Murderer,” when he laughed aloud in the face of the Court ; but it was received unanimously by the spectators with that stern hum of approbation peculiar to the religious enthusiasts of the period, in which demonstration, however, the Judges took no part.

At this moment a very singular accident occurred which the superstitious are inclined to

invest with more importance than it deserves perhaps, but which it would be injudicious to omit altogether.

As the King sat leaning carelessly on the long Malacca cane which it was the fashion for men of consideration of that day to encumber themselves with, and laughing defyingly at the same time, the head of the staff suddenly snapped and rolled on the ground. Charles stooped hastily to gather up the little ornament with his own hands, and seemed more disturbed than the circumstance seemed to warrant to ordinary apprehensions, until it was known that it represented in miniature, a *Royal Crown*.

The President Bradshaw now addressed the prisoner, in a tone of grave rebuke. "Sir," he said, "I regret that it should fall to my lot in the  
"beginning of this affair to have to reprehend you  
"on a matter which, to some, may savour of cap-  
"tiousness. But it is my duty to uphold the  
"dignity of the office with which I have been  
"honoured by my countrymen. I must therefore  
"tell you, sir, that you have violated the customs  
"of good breeding, and shown but scant deference  
"to this High Tribunal, in not uncovering your  
"head; and although it lies within my authority  
"to have that done by force which your own sense  
"of courtesy did not stimulate, I shall refrain from

“ exercising that power more from contempt than  
“ from any regard to your personal comfort and  
“ dignity ; and also in respect of a graver and  
“ more important issue. You have heard that the  
“ Parliament of England has appointed this High  
“ Court of Justice to try you, sir, for the several  
“ Treasons and Misdemeanours which you have  
“ committed against the kingdom during the evil  
“ administration of your government, and on the  
“ examination thereof, to do strict, impartial, and  
“ stern Justice. It is not however necessary  
“ that I should dwell at this period of the pro-  
“ ceedings on things that are matters of public and  
“ common notoriety. I shall therefore, merely  
“ demand on behalf of the Prosecution, what  
“ answer you have to make to the said Impeach-  
“ ment ? ”

“ It is beneath our dignity,” replied the prisoner, with the utmost haughtiness, “ to notice your preliminary discourse ; but as to the rest, we wish first to know by what authority you have presumed to bring us before you, and who has given you power to judge *our* actions ? for which *we are accountable to none but God* ; though they have always been such as we are not ashamed to own before all the world. We are,” he continued emphatically, without waiting for an answer to his inquiry, “ we are your anointed King, and you are

“our subjects, owing us duty and obedience. No  
“Parliament ever had authority to call us before  
“them; and even if an English Parliament did  
“possess such a power, no such authority has been  
“delegated to you by them. As to your preten-  
“sion of representing the will and wishes of our  
“faithful subjects of England, Ireland, and Scot-  
“land, we hold it in contempt! For of all your  
“body, excepting such as being in the army we  
“could not but know whilst forced to be with  
“them, there are only two faces amongst you  
“that we have ever seen before, or whose names  
“are known to us.”

The prisoner then entered into a long, rambling argument, showing that the authority of Kings was based on Divine Right, and did not in any degree proceed from the People; and that, moreover, the office was Hereditary, and not Elective. Consequently, that their Prerogative could not be lessened by any straining of law, either Human or Divine; and that they themselves even could not surrender any of their Privileges, inasmuch as they not only held them for their own personal advantage and dignity, but in trust for their Successors. Finally, he lectured the Court in ungracious terms, as to the duty of subjects towards Kings, and concluded by saying,

“Under all which circumstances, we will not

“betray Ourselves and Our Royal Dignity, so as to  
“answer anything that has been objected against  
“us, which would be to acknowledge the authority  
“of this *meeting*. Though, we are firmly per-  
“suaded that every one of you, as well as the  
“spectators, do in your consciences absolve us from  
“all the material things which have been objected  
“against us.”

The Court listened to this long, rash, and defiant harangue with patience and attention, never once interrupting the speaker, although his observations were extremely insulting towards themselves: but at its finish the President replied, in warning and ominous tones,

“Sir, do not deceive yourself with the opinion  
“that anything you have said will do you any  
“good; for the Parliament understands its own  
“authority, and this Court its duty. Therefore,  
“I would advise you to think better of your posi-  
“tion against the next time you are brought  
“hither and answer directly to the Indictment; as  
“you cannot be so ignorant as not to know, what  
“judgment the law pronounces against those who  
“stand mute and obstinately refuse to plead.”

So saying, the President commanded Colonel Tomlinson to carry the prisoner back to Palace Yard, and adjourned the Court till further orders.

On Sunday the 21st of January, the Commissioners of the High Court of Justice, headed by their President, attended St. Margaret's Chapel in a body to pray for light, when the celebrated Independent divine Hugh Peters preached before them to the very significant text,

Bind your kings with chains and your nobles with links of iron.

On Monday, the 22nd, they assembled again in Westminster Hall, and the King with the same ceremonials as before, was again placed at their bar; and with the same result, viz., the denial of their jurisdiction by the royal prisoner.

The Lord President thereupon ordered the Contempt of Court to be entered in their proceedings, and remanded the prisoner.

On Tuesday, the 23rd, the Judges again assembled, having, after some private deliberation, resolved to allow the prisoner one more opportunity of pleading before proceeding against him as contumacious; and the King being placed at the bar as before, Mr. Solicitor-General Cook rose and said—

“ My Lord President,

“ This is now the third time that by the grace and favour of this High Court, the prisoner hath been brought to the bar without issue being joined. I exhibited against him, on behalf of the People of



England, a charge of the highest treason ever wrought on the theatre of this free country. My Lord, he did dispute the authority of the Court. Your Lordship gave him a day to consider and put in his answer yesterday, but he was then pleased to demur again to the jurisdiction of the Court, which the Court did overrule. I now therefore move for speedy judgment against the prisoner. I might press your Lordship that when a prisoner is contumacious, according to the law of the land, it shall be taken *pro confesso* against him. But, my Lord, the House of Commons, the supreme authority and jurisdiction of the kingdom, have declared that it is *notorious* the charge is true, as it is in truth as clear as crystal and as the sun that shines at noonday ; which however, if the Court be not satisfied in, I have in support of the indictment, many witnesses to produce. And therefore I pray (and yet it is not so much I, as the innocent blood that hath been shed, the cry whereof is very great for justice and judgment) that speedy judgment be pronounced against the prisoner."

The Lord President then warned the King in earnest terms that if he proved contumacious, he must expect no further time, and that it behoved him, if he desired an opportunity of proving his innocence, that he give a positive and final answer

in plain English, whether he was guilty or not guilty of the treasons laid to his charge.

The prisoner however was in no way moved, and as before, endeavoured to provoke an irregular discussion, repudiating however, in the same breath, the jurisdiction of the Court *in toto*. But the patience of his Judges was completely exhausted, and the Lord President sternly ordered the "default" to be officially recorded and remanded the prisoner for the last time. And so, through pride, obstinacy and want of ordinary discernment, mingled with his mania about the inviolability of anointed Royalty, (for he still firmly believed that his person under all circumstances would be respected,) Charles deliberately threw away the last chance he had of saving his life, explaining his motives, and perhaps of retrieving in some measure his lost reputation.

Indeed this monomania received presently a very significant illustration, for as the King left the Court, he pointed with his staff to the Sword of Justice which lay on the table before the Judges and exclaimed scornfully,

"I do not fear that!"

The Court in its sitting of the 24th of January, resolved that evidence should be recorded against the King, and appointing sixteen of their number to receive the same, the 25th was occupied in that

duty ; and on the 26th, the Judges agreed on their sentence, ordered it to be engrossed, and the prisoner to be brought up for judgment on the following day.

Accordingly on the 27th of January, the High Court of Justice re-assembled in Westminster Hall, and the King was placed at their bar for the last time.

Charles exhibited at first his usual air of haughtiness, and retained his hat on his head defyingly as on former occasions ; but very shortly an unexpected change came over the royal bearing.

This was caused by loud shouts of "Justice ! Justice ! Execution ! Execution !" rising suddenly on all sides as the prisoner entered ; and then for the first time, the King awoke to the real perils of his position, and hastened to appeal to the Judges with an earnestness and humility which contrasted strongly with his previous conduct, as the following dialogue taken *verbatim* from the proceedings will show.

*The King.*—I desire a word to be heard a little and I hope I shall give no occasion of interruption.

*The President.*—You may answer in your turn sir ; hear the Court first.

*The King.*—If it please you sir, I desire to be heard ; and I shall not give any occasion of inter-

ruption ; and it is only a word. A sudden judgment—

*The President.*—Sir, you shall be heard in due time ; but you are to hear the Court first.

*The King.*—Sir, I desire. It will be in order to what I believe the Court will say. Sir, an hasty judgment is not so soon recalled—.

*The President.*—Sir, you shall be heard before the judgment is given ; and in the meantime you must forbear.

*The King.*—Well sir, shall I be heard before the judgment be given ?

The President made no reply to this reiterated question, but addressed himself to the Commissioners.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “it is well known to you that the prisoner at the bar hath been several times brought before this Court to make answer to a charge of treason and other high crimes exhibited against him in the name of the People of England : to which charge being required to answer, he hath been so far from obeying the commands of the Court as to take upon himself to offer reasoning and debate against the authority of this Court and of that Higher Court which constituted it : but being overruled in that, he was still pleased to continue contumacious and to refuse to submit or answer. Hereupon this Court, that it might not

be wanting to itself, to the trust reposed in it, or that any man's wilfulness should prevent justice, has considered of the said charge,—of the contumacy,—of the confession which in law doth arise upon that contumacy,—and of the notoriety of the facts charged on the prisoner: And upon the whole matter they are resolved and agreed upon a Sentence to be pronounced against him. But in respect he doth desire to be heard before the Sentence be read and pronounced, the Court hath determined to hear him. Yet, sir," he continued, addressing the prisoner, "thus much I must tell you beforehand, that if that which you have to say be to offer any debate concerning our jurisdiction, you will not be heard on it. You have offered it formerly and you thereby struck at the root; that is, at the Power and Supreme Authority of the Commons of England; on which question, this Court will not admit of any objections. But sir, if you have anything to say in defence of yourself concerning the matter charged, the Court hath given me in command to tell you, that it will hear you."

The King replied to these observations of the President, no longer with the haughty flippancy which had prejudiced his cause in the earlier stages of the Trial, but with the earnestness due to the occasion and his own personal dignity.

"Since I see," he said, "that you will not hear anything of debate concerning that which I confess I thought most material for the peace of the kingdom and for the liberty of the subject, I shall waive it. I shall speak nothing to it, but only I must tell you that this many a day all things have been taken away from me but that I call more dear to me than my life, which is my conscience and my honour. And if I had a respect to my life more than the peace of the kingdom and the liberty of the subject, certainly I should have made a particular defence for myself; for by that, at leastwise, I might have delayed an ugly sentence which I believe will pass on me. Therefore sir, certainly as a man possessing some understanding and some knowledge of the world, if that my true zeal to my country had not overborne the care that I have for my own preservation, I should have gone another way to work than that I have done. Now, sir, I conceive that an hasty sentence once passed, may sooner be repented of than recalled; and truly the self-same desire that I have for the peace of the kingdom and the liberty of the subject more than my own particular ends, makes me now *at last desire before sentence be given*, that I may be heard *in the painted chamber before the Lords and Commons*. This delay cannot be prejudicial to you whatsoever I say; if that I say no reason,

those that hear me must be judges : if it be reason and really for the welfare of the kingdom and the liberty of the subject, I am sure it is very well the worth hearing. Therefore I do conjure you as you love that that you pretend (I hope it is real)—the liberty of the subject, the peace of the kingdom,—that you will grant me this hearing before any sentence be passed. I only desire that you will take this into your consideration ; it may be you have not heard of it beforehand ; if you will, I will retire that you may think of it. But if I cannot get this liberty, I do protest that these fair shows of liberty and peace are only pure shows and that you will not hear your King.”

At the conclusion of the King’s address, the President inquired, “ Sir, have you now spoken ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” answered the prisoner.

“ This then that you have said, sir,” continued Bradshaw, “ is a *further* declining of the Jurisdiction of this Court, which was the thing wherein you were limited before.”

“ Pray excuse me for my interruption, sir,” Charles courteously urged, “ because you mistake me : it is not a *declining* of your jurisdiction but rather that you do judge me *before you hear me speak*.”

“ I understand you well, sir,” replied the President, “ but nevertheless that which you have

advanced seems to be contrary to that saying of yours. The Court is now ready to give sentence, and it is not as you say, without hearing their King; for they have been willing to hear you and have patiently waited your pleasure for three days together, but you have not vouchsafed to give any answer at all. Sir, what you now urge tends to a further delay. Truly, sir, such delays as these neither may the Kingdom nor Justice well bear; and you have already had three several days to have offered in this kind what you would have pleased. This Court, sir, is founded upon that Authority of the Commons of England in whom rests the Supreme Jurisdiction: *that* which you now tender is to have *another* jurisdiction and a *co-ordinate* jurisdiction."

This desire of the King to be heard in the Painted Chamber before the Lords and Commons has been considered by historians as relating to a proposal which he was known to entertain of abdicating the crown in favour of his eldest son, and so escaping from all *personal consequences to himself*; but the men he was dealing with were not to be led astray from their solemn purpose, which evidently was as much to make an *example* which would weigh heavily on despotism to the end of time, as to secure their own hardly-earned privileges by the sacrifice of a single victim. The



Lord President therefore was about to carry out those intentions according to previous arrangement, when an unexpected interruption took place, interesting in itself as illustrating what may be regarded as the conscientious scruples of the stern enthusiasts who sat in judgment on their captive King.

Mr. John Downes, one of the Judges, who was seated between Mr. William Cawley and Colonel Valentine Wauton, brother-in-law to O. Cromwell, was so much moved at Charles's entreaty, that he informed the Lord President that "he was not satisfied to give his consent to the sentence, and had reasons to offer against it; and requested that the Court might adjourn to hear them."

The President seemed very much surprised, *but as it had been agreed that no sentence should be passed which was not unanimously approved of*, Mr. Downes's request was assented to, and the Judges withdrew in a body into the Inner Court of Wards, and Charles retired into a private room with Bishop Juxon.

In about half-an-hour the Judges returned, and the Lord President commanded the Sergeant-at-arms to produce his prisoner, and as soon as he was placed at the bar he addressed him thus:—

"Sir, you were pleased to make a motion to the Court touching the propounding of somewhat to

the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber for the peace of the kingdom. Sir, you did in effect receive an answer before the Court adjourned: Truly, sir, their adjournment was *pro forma tantum*, for it did not seem to them that there was any difficulty in the thing. They have however considered of what you have moved and of their own authority, and the return I have to make to you from the Court is this:—That they have been too much delayed by you already, and this that you now offer hath occasioned further delay: That they are Judges appointed by the Highest Authority: That Judges are no more to delay than to deny Justice: That the words in the great old Charter of England are good words, ‘Nulli negabimus, Nulli vendemus, Nulli differemus Justitiam;’ and that therefore there must be no delay. But the truth is, sir, and every man here observes it, that you have so much delayed them in your contempt and default, that they might long since have proceeded to judgment against you; and notwithstanding what you have offered they are determined now to do so; and that is their unanimous resolution.”

“Sir,” replied the prisoner, “I know it is vain for me to dispute; I am no sceptic to deny your power; I know that you have power enough. But, sir, I think it would have been for the kingdom’s peace if you had taken the pains to show the law-

fulness of your power. For this delay that I have desired, it is a delay very important for the peace of the kingdom ; for it is not my person that I look at alone, it is the kingdom's welfare and the kingdom's peace. It is an old maxim 'that we should think on long before we resolve of great matters.' Therefore, sir, I do put at your doors all the inconveniency of a hasty sentence. I have been here now I think a week ; this day eight days was the day I came here first, and a little delay of a day or two farther may give peace ; whereas a hasty judgment may bring on that trouble and perpetual inconveniency to the kingdom that the child that is unborn may repent it. Therefore again out of the duty I owe to God and my country, I do desire that I may be heard by the Lords and Commons in the Painted Chamber, or any other chamber that you will appoint me."

"Sir," said the President, "you have been already answered to what you even now moved, being the same you moved before. And the Court now requires to know whether you have any more to say for yourself than that you *have* said, before they proceed to sentence ?"

"I say this, 'sir," said Charles very earnestly, "that if you *will* hear me—if you will give me but this delay—I doubt not I shall give some satisfaction to you all here and to my people after that.

And therefore I do request you, as you will answer it at the dreadful Day of Judgment, that you consider it once again."

"Sir," answered the President firmly, "I have received the directions of the Court."

"Well, sir?" was the nervous interrogation.

"If this must be reinforced, your answer must be the same; and therefore they will proceed to sentence if you have nothing more to say."

"Sir!" exclaimed the King passionately, "I have nothing more to say. But I desire that this may be entered what I have said."

"The Court then, sir," replied the Lord President with much solemnity, "hath something to say unto you; which although I know it will be very unacceptable, yet notwithstanding they are willing and resolved to discharge their duty."

He then in a long and learned address laid before the judges and the prisoner the various reasons which his party held to be conclusive on the question before the Court; illustrating and fortifying his arguments with references to the Scriptures and quotations from ancient and modern writers on Jurisprudence and the Fundamental Laws of Society. During the greater part of his discourse the King remained silent and attentive, occasionally smiling and lifting his hands to heaven as some sentiment more than another grated across his own convic-

tions ; and once only when the orator maintained that it would have been well if *any* of the crimes enumerated in the charge could have been justly omitted, exclaiming, "Ha!" but as the President approached its conclusion, the prisoner made another and last effort in arrest of Judgment, for he seemed to feel that Sentence once passed his *doom was irrevocable*.

"I would desire," he cried, with much eagerness interrupting the Lord President, "only one word before you give sentence. I desire that you would hear me concerning those great imputations that you have laid to my charge."

"Sir," replied the President sternly, "you must now give me leave to go on, for I am not far from your sentence and *your time is past*."

"But I shall desire," observed the prisoner, "that you will hear me—only a few words to you. For truly whatever sentence you will put on me in respect of those heavy imputations that I see by your speech you have put on me.—Sir, it is very true that——"

"Sir," reiterated the President, "I must again caution you. Truly, sir, I would not willingly, at this time especially, interrupt you in anything you have to say that is proper for us to admit. But, sir, you have not acknowledged us as a Court, and you look upon us as a sort of people met together ;

and we know also what language we receive from your party."

"I know nothing of that," exclaimed the King.

The President resumed his discourse after this last and despairing effort at interruption, and terminated it with a pathetic appeal to the prisoner to turn his thoughts to a future state and to make his peace with heaven, for that his earthly career was near its close; and finally he ordered the Marshal of the Court to make a solemn Oyez and command silence, that the Sentence of the High Court of Justice might be heard by all the People.

This being done, the Clerk of Arraigs rose in the midst of death-like stillness and read aloud the Words of Doom.

It recited the Act of the House of Commons establishing the High Court of Justice and the Charge exhibited against the prisoner; his Majesty's refusal to answer or admit the jurisdiction of the said Court; that the Court had therefore given Judgment against him for his Contumacy, but for further satisfaction had examined witnesses on oath touching the Charge; that on mature deliberation of the Premises and consideration of the notoriety of the Facts brought against the prisoner, the Court was in conscience satisfied that the said Charles Stuart was guilty of levying War against the Parliament and People and also of the general

evil course of his Government, Counsels, and Practices before and since this present Parliament began, and of all the other wicked designs and endeavours set forth in the Charge. And that accordingly he had been the Occasioner, Author, and Continuer of the said Unnatural, Cruel, and Bloody Wars, and of the Murders, Rapines, Burnings, Spoils, Desolations, Damages, and Mischiefs to this Nation, acted and committed in the said Wars, and was therein guilty of High Treason.

For all which Treason and Crimes the High Court of Justice adjudged, that he Charles Stuart should as a Tyrant, Traitor, Murderer, and Public Enemy to the good People of England, be put to death by the severing of his head from his body.

As soon as the Clerk of Arraignment had read the Sentence, the Lord High President stated that it was the Act, Sentence, Judgment, and Resolution of the *whole Court*, to which *all the Commissioners* expressed their assent by silently standing up as had before been arranged in the Painted Chamber; and it is worthy of remark that throughout this long trial, not one of the Judges with the exception of Mr. Downes, made a single observation of any kind.

The King who had smiled and raised his hands to heaven appealingly during the publication of the Sentence, now anxiously exclaimed,

“Will you hear me one word, sir?”

"Sir," replied Bradshaw, "you cannot be heard after sentence."

"No sir?" asked the prisoner.

"No sir;" was the uncompromising answer.  
"Guards, withdraw your prisoner."

"I *may* speak after sentence, sir, by your favour," cried the King losing his self-control at this awful moment. "I *may* speak *ever*. By your favour—"

"Hold!" said the President.

"The sentence, sir," persisted Charles very nervously. "I say, sir, I do—"

"Hold!" shouted the Lord High President.

"I am not suffered to speak," exclaimed Charles piteously. "Expect what justice the people will have."

And so the unfortunate Monarch was removed from the Court, and conducted in the first instance as usual to Sir Robert Cotton's residence; but was soon after removed to Whitehall, where he remained till the night before his execution, when he was transferred to St. James's Palace.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE EXECUTION.

In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
With good old folks ; and let them tell thee tales  
Of woful ages long ago betid :  
And ere thou bid good-night to quit their grief  
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me,  
And send the hearers weeping to their beds.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the 29th of January, 1649, all London and its vicinity were early astir, for it was generally known, that on that day Charles Stuart King of England would suffer for his crimes on the public scaffold.

The streets, the lanes, and the alleys leading towards Whitehall, were accordingly thronged with multitudes hurrying to the scene of expiation ; the river was covered with fleets of boats pressing onwards to the same fatal bourne ; and every window, tree, and house-top that commanded a view of the scaffold or the line of route through which the Condemned would pass, were soon covered with agitated spectators.

As the hour of Doom approached, many who had

hitherto felt satisfied of the Justice and Necessity of the step, began to waver and lose nerve ; for never before in the history of the Human Race, had a King been exposed to the last dread penalty of the Law.

Many tyrants had indeed been cut off by the vigorous action of outraged Humanity ; but in such cases, the suddenness of the blow, the irresponsibility of the masses, and the taint of individual impulse, detracted from its utility as a wholesome lesson of Political Retribution. Others again on the other hand, had perished through the heated and hasty movements of adverse factions ; and there the majority had usually obtained those advantages which weakened tenure permits, without being depressed by the consciousness of direct personal implication, or disturbed by those scruples which reflection generally engenders.

But *here*, there had been time for consideration. *Here*, was a general participation. No unseemly haste had thrust itself between the design and its accomplishment. No turmoil interrupted the communings of slumbering conscience ; no sophistry could shift the onus on other shoulders ; for deliberation had waited on every step of these awful proceedings, order had marked its every phase, and the Royal Criminal had been prosecuted in the name and at the instance of all his offended

subjects. Each one therefore felt not only that his own responsibility was involved in the issue, but that an impressive demonstration would even at the eleventh hour arrest the fiat of swift approaching doom. Nor can there be the smallest doubt, that such an effect *would* have been produced by an united expression of the Popular Will; for the citizens of London, independent of their great natural weight in the country, had taken so decided a lead in the resistance to the Royal Prerogative, and had made so many sacrifices to attain their just privileges as Freeborn Men, that they were in a position not only to be heard in the councils of the nation, but even to control the proceedings of their most impetuous leaders.

Some too remembered the unfortunate Monarch's noble presence and courteous manners, his love of the fine arts, his gallant conduct in the field, and last, not least, his domestic virtues; for in all ages the reputation of being a kind husband, a good father, and a hospitable neighbour, has carried great weight amongst the English. Such then were the feelings that swayed the kindly disposed, well-intentioned, but vacillating populace; but such were not those of the Great Spirits who had been appointed by Fate to play this solemn part on the stage of Instructive History.

*They* felt perfectly assured in their hearts of

the absolute necessity of the measure, and in that assurance found the strength and calmness requisite to carry out the behests of Justice, and early as was the outpouring of the multitude on that eventful morning, there was One, and he the Master Spirit of all, who had risen yet earlier to urge on the details necessary to bring this stern episode to its proper and legitimate consummation.

Long before dawn, a stout athletic man, wrapped in a military cloak and carrying a lanthorn in his hand, might be seen ascending the stone staircase which led to some of the military wards of the Palace of Whitehall. He mounted slowly stage after stage to the very top of the building, and then halting for a moment before a strong oak door to take breath, he lifted its heavy latch and entered softly.

It was a stone vaulted room at the top of one of the turrets, scantily furnished with a rough table and chair, and a large awkward bedstead. On the table carefully arranged, lay the cuirass, helmet, and glaives of an "Ironside," and beside them an empty black jack, the remains of last night's supper, and a small well-worn pocket Bible; and on the bedstead, sound asleep, was stretched the colossal form of a gigantic trooper, clad in the buff-leather undress and riding-boots of his renowned regiment, and partially enveloped

in his long cavalry-cloak. He was dreaming ; and as the light of the lanthorn fell flickering across his rugged features, his hand would steal towards the handle of his longsword which lay drawn beside him, and he would murmur words of startling import. The Intruder seemed to shudder as he caught their significance, and he advanced eagerly to rouse the Sleeper, as if fearing to hear something he dreaded still more.

"What ho !" he cried in a deep voice, shaking the giant by the shoulder. "What ho ! sleepest thou still, friend Grimbolt ?"

"Ha !" exclaimed the other wildly, springing from his couch, "is it *thou*, General ? Methought there was *another* beside me !"

"*Another !*" replied the New Comer in hesitating tones. "*Another !* why thou art still half-asleep ; awake thee, good Jonathan."

"Nay, I *am* awake ; but," and he became again dreadfully agitated, "I have seen a vision !"

"A vision !" exclaimed Cromwell, changing colour.

"Yea !" replied the Independent trembling like a school-girl. "And verily thus it came to pass. As I lay here pondering on the wondrous things the Lord has done in these latter days for his Chosen People, even then the clouds parted and the heavens opened, and there came forth *One* on whose countenance none may look

without awe and terror : and *He* stood beside me : and, *there was blood on his garments !*"

"Pshaw man !" interposed the General hastily ;  
"thou didst but dream !"

"Not so !" replied Jonathan the Upright doggedly.  
"The Lord was gracious unto me, and I saw it with my own eyes albeit the flesh is malcontent."

"I tell thee again, no !" said the General very angrily, recognising in his follower's dreamings the passage from the Revelation of St. John, which had no doubt become so conglomerated with many others of a similar character in the pious Jonathan's somewhat muddy memory, as to lead him to mistake it for an original inspiration. "It *cannot* be ! for what thou sayest now *has been said before*. Awake thee man ! This is no time for sluggards !"

The Independent passed his large hand across his eyes with a bewildered air, and looking upwards into his great Leader's face with the expression of a child who 'being alarmed seeks encouragement from its nurse, answered with much simplicity,

"*Then*, it must be as thou sayest ; and yet it seemed otherwise to me ; but the Lord's will be done."

Saying which he began to attire himself with the rapidity of well-practised habits, Cromwell

assisting to buckle on his armour in a very familiar way.

"The Lord notwithstanding," continued the General in a kinder tone, "has not forgotten thy long and faithful services, and calleth thee again into the vineyard ; for verily there is earnest work to be done."

"And may my right arm wither," exclaimed the Ironside, stretching forth his mighty limb, "even as the arm of Jeroboam, if I falter at the summons !"

"And yet," said Cromwell pretending to hesitate, "the work is not of a sort exactly suited to thy martial habits, and maybe——"

"Nay," replied Grimbold sullenly, "if it be of the crooked nature of diplomacy or dissembling or other designs of the Evil One, to which it behoveth me to say thou art too much addicted, friend Oliver, I would commend thee to others of thy followings ; for such unsavoury doings," he added, turning up his eyes and nose with a frightful whine, "suiteth not the teachings of the Saints or the principles and practices of Jonathan the Upright."

"Thou mistakest, old comrade," said *friend* Oliver, scarcely able to restrain his laughter ; "it is not as thou suspectest ; but an action of the most prompt and downright character which is required of thee."

There was something so very peculiar in the tone of the General's voice as he uttered this last sentence, which betrayed itself in spite of its affected indifference, that the Independent snatched up the lanthorn and turned its light on his countenance.

It was looming dark as a tragic volume.

"Say on! and say quickly!" whispered the awe-struck Dreamer.

"Know then, that he who was appointed by the Council to do execution on the Condemned Man has waxed fainthearted, and refuseth the office even at the eleventh hour, as he feareth assassination at the hands of the malignant. So that we are fearful that a delay may take place, unless a patriot is quickly found equal to the occasion."

"And he *is* found!" exclaimed the stern Visionary with the utmost vehemence. "Said I not that this arm should rot an I turned back from the bidding? Verily the Lord hath heard my pledge, and calleth for fulfilment; and even I, Jonathan the son of Grimbald, will do *His* will, and slay the Tyrant in the face of the People!"

"Come then with me," said Cromwell, "and I will explain to thee the method of thy office, lest Propriety be violated, and so Example weakened." And blowing out his lanthorn, (for it was now dawn) he returned down the turret stair accompanied by his faithful follower.



They proceeded in this manner for some time, Cromwell showing the way through many offices, passages, and corridors, till they reached the principal part of the Palace, and entered a stately saloon.

"This," he said, "is the Banqueting-room ; and here the Condemned Man will rest awhile, and take such refreshment as may be needful for body and soul ; and then he will be brought through this opening, which you see has been broken in the wall, on to the Place of Doom."

So saying, he led the Independent through a passage which had recently been made between the two centre windows of the Banqueting-room, across a light wood bridge which connected it with the Scaffold.

The latter edifice was built on a large and solid scale, and projected far into the open space opposite White Hall : it was entirely covered with black cloth, as was the temporary bridge over which they had passed ; and the axe and block were placed ready at its northern side.

"He will then," continued Cromwell, "be handed over to the Executioner, who must be masqued. And now observe *strictly* : he will be accompanied by some friends, and both he and they must be treated with *scrupulous respect* ; and whatever delay they may require for prayer

or leave-taking must be *at once acceded to* : and moreover, if the Condemned Man is desirous of addressing the people in justification or otherwise, he will have full permission to do so without *any sort of hindrance or pressure of time*. Hearest thou ?”

“I attend to thy instructions, General : say on.”

“But stay,” said the other suddenly ; “we have to deal with one of a stubborn heart and sanguine temperament ; and he may be stirred to resist the Sentence. We must therefore be prepared to prevent an unseemly exhibition. Get thou then presently a joiner, and let him rivet three iron rings into these planks : say in these spots,” touching the places with his foot ; “and have thou ready some strong cords ; so that if there *be* resistance, *he may be forced to his doom*.”

“And what then ?” said Grimbald in a hoarse whisper.

“Then !” said Cromwell with awful emphasis, “Strike ! Strike as thou didst at Marston Moor ! And Justice, Liberty, and Religion will be vindicated !”

And while his deep voice was still ringing in the ears of “The Independent,” he turned on his heel and left the scaffold with a rapid step.

It was now break of day, and it seemed as if

Nature too had determined to add to the general melancholy by donning her saddest garments. The sky was lowering and of a leaden hue, and stormy clouds went riding across its boding surface in heavy, changing folds; here gathering fiercely to a head, there dispersing again as they came in collision with some opposing vein of vapour, and then driving suddenly onward once more as if yet more infuriated by resistance; till at length they drifted away to the far West, and combined together in one vast phalanx of menace, like expatriated fugitives full of dark and swelling discontent. An under-current of Winter's biting breath blew likewise in chill gusts down the silent streets, and wailed through the courts and alleys, and gibbered round the gable-ended houses, with the unearthly moaning, which Superstition ascribes to perturbed spirits.

And the fog, which lay in lazy patches on the park lands and open spaces, as it felt from time to time the fitful force of the bitter East, would rise like a funereal Pall from the dank and dreary earth, hang for a moment over the watchful city, and so separating into fantastic shapes, disappear slowly into gloomy space: while the ancient elms which surrounded the old Palace of White Hall, would at intervals as the fickle ice blast momentarily descended on their time-honoured heads,

suddenly wave their denuded limbs wildly in the air, as if appealing to Heaven itself against the pre-meditated sacrilege, and then subside as quickly into frozen and withered inaction.

Presently the stern silence was broken by the measured tramp of the military, and the brigade of "Ironsides," clad in complete armour, marched with banners displayed to White Hall, and were drawn up in dense array round the Scaffold; and the open spaces at Charing Cross and in St. James's Park were occupied in regular succession by heavy detachments of Infantry. But here also was met the same air of depression which everywhere haunted the scene; for the troops marched and effected their formations without beat of drum, and the aspect of the soldiery was sad and thoughtful in the extreme.

Meanwhile a still more striking episode was filling all hearts *save one*, with sorrow and consternation at St. James's Palace.

On the previous evening, several of the most eminent of the Dissenting divines had waited on the King by order of the House of Commons, with respectful offers to assist his Majesty spiritually for the awful change which was fast approaching; but Charles declined their well-meant designs very courteously indeed, observing that he naturally preferred the services of his old friend Bishop

Juxon ; and begged them in lieu thereof, to ask permission from their new masters that he might see his children without delay, as his time was growing short and precious for earthly interests.

The request was immediately granted, and a most touching interview took place.

The eldest of the two children, Elizabeth, a princess of great promise and sweetness of disposition, was old enough, being in her fourteenth year, to appreciate the terrible reality of their circumstances, and nobly endeavoured to restrain her own deep sorrow lest it should increase that of her father ; and the King being much moved with her forbearance and the great improvement he found in her since they last met at Hampton Court, sent by her many pressing messages to the Queen, and the Prince his son.

He desired her especially to say to her mother on his part, that he died as he had lived, her true lover and faithful husband, and that his last thought on earth would be upon her. To the Prince, he desired to be remembered with fatherly affection ; warned him to learn wisdom by his misfortunes ; and commanded him most earnestly in the true and beautiful spirit of Christianity, that should these evil times pass away and God in his goodness restore him to his just inheritance, that *he should*

*pardon all his father's enemies and not pursue them with malice or vengeance.*

He further urged her to read "Bishop Andrew's Sermons," "Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity," and "Archbishop Laud's Book against Fisher;" all which Works would tend to strengthen her faith and attachment to the Church of England, and increase her aversion to Popery; and beseeching her not to grieve overmuch for him as he should die a glorious death, it being for the laws and liberties of the land and the maintenance of the true Protestant Religion, he gave her two seals set with diamonds in remembrance of himself.

"But Sweetheart," he said kissing her tenderly, "you will forget all these things?"

"No!" she exclaimed through her sobs, "I will never forget them as long as I live!"

Charles then took up the little Duke of Gloucester, a pretty child about seven years old, and placing him fondly on his knee, tried with many caresses to make him comprehend the sorrowful truth.

"Brave Heart," said the King, "now they will cut off thy father's head."

Upon which the poor child's eyes grew larger and rounder, and he looked up with a puzzled and awestruck countenance.

"Yes!" continued the unfortunate father; "they will cut off my head, and perhaps make thee a King. But, mark well what I say: *you must not be a King* so long as your brothers Charles and James do live, or they will cut off your brothers' heads when they do catch them; and at last, cut off thy head also! And therefore I charge you, *do not* be made a King by them."

"I will be torn in pieces first!" unexpectedly exclaimed the little Prince.

This spirited reply brought the tears into the King's eyes, and he expressed himself quite thankful and satisfied at finding so much steadfastness of purpose in one so young.

And so with much weeping, sighs, and tender embraces, the poor children were removed by the good bishop; and the almost broken-hearted Monarch retired to his sleeping apartment, declaring that now the bitterness of death was passed; and there turning his thoughts to a better world, he communed in solitude with his own thoughts.

Nearly two hours passed in this manner, when he rang for lights and informed Juxon in a tone of manly resignation, that he had taken his leave of earthly affections as well as of all acrimonious feelings, and was ready to meet his doom.

A short repast followed, of which he partook heartily, conversing with his wonted courtesy and

cheerfulness during its service ; and afterwards he entered into a long and more serious conversation with the bishop, giving him full instructions on all matters of Church and State, and appointing him his sole executor.

The King lastly, requested the bishop to read to him the usual lessons of the day, (a custom which he never neglected,) and promising to receive the Sacrament on the next morning, he retired to rest and slept soundly throughout the remainder of the night, Sir Thomas Herbert reposing on a pallet beside him.

Ralph Sedley, who was in faithful attendance, roused his Majesty early according to orders on the Day of Doom, and assisted him to make his toilette ; and never in Charles's happiest days was it performed with greater care.

The first thing the King inquired about, was the weather ; and when Sedley described it as unusually cold, Charles resolved to put on two shirts, lest, he laughingly observed, "the cold should make him tremble and the knaves place it to fear."

Over all he put on the Badge and Jewel of the Noble Order of the Garter, and then summoning Bishop Juxon to his presence, he begged him to read something in the way of consolation from the Gospels ; and the bishop accordingly read the 27th



chapter of St. Matthew, which describes the Passion of our Saviour. Charles thanked him for his *selection*, believing it to be one; but with a touch of his old superstition, was particularly gratified at finding, that it was *the lesson for the day according to the calendar*. And finally he received the last Sacrament of the Church with the utmost devoutness.

His mind seemed now quite relieved and even cheerful; and he invited the Bishop, Herbert, and Sedley, to join him in his breakfast, which *he* enjoyed with excellent appetite, though his followers were too devoured with grief to do more than go through the forms of eating.

And now after his old fashion, he began to be impatient at the delay, and sent a message to Colonel Tomlinson saying "that he was quite ready."

He had not however much longer to wait, for in a few minutes more, precisely at the hour of 10 A.M., that officer entered the room with a face full of concern, and respectfully informed the King that the hour of departure had arrived.

Charles inquired of the Colonel whether the Bishop and other friends would be allowed to accompany him.

"My orders, Sire, are," replied Tomlinson deferentially, "that they may bear your Majesty company as far as the Banqueting-room; but the Bishop only can go—further."

"Be it so," said the King. "We must submit to that we cannot prevent."

He then rose and led the way with dignity from the apartment through the garden into the Park, and there finding a regiment of infantry drawn up in close column of companies, he placed himself with alacrity at their head, having Colonel Tomlinson uncovered on one side, and his few friends on the other; and at the word of command "To march," he stepped manfully forth more like an officer leading his troops on parade than a criminal creeping to the scaffold.

Their way lay to the north-east end of St. James's Park, through which they marched with drums beating and colours flying, and the King, who always loved "The pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," inspirited by the scene and exercise, turned gaily to the soldiers and waving his hand, called on them "To march apace!" and declared to those around him, "that he now went to strive for a heavenly crown with less solitude than he had often encouraged his soldiers to fight for an earthly one."

As they advanced, the vast multitudes that were gathered together from all parts of the earth on the line of route, maintained a complete and mournful silence, refraining with admirable feeling from aggravating the unfortunate monarch's

position by those calls for "justice" and the other demonstrations to which they had given way on the last day of his trial.

Occasionally, however, an old Cavalier hat was raised, some grey veteran head was uncovered, and a "God bless you!" was stealthily murmured.

But these instances were exceptions to the rule which held the populace in breathless suspense; and it almost seemed as if his subjects generally speaking, although they regretted the necessity of the action that was being done, yet still were resolute to do it.

As they cleared the east end of the ponds, Charles who was conversing cheerfully the whole way with the gentlemen around him, turned to Colonel Tomlinson, and pointing to a tree which was flourishing vigorously—

"That tree, colonel," said he, "was planted by my poor brother Henry!"

In this way they reached the straggling Palace of Whitehall, and mounting the stairs leading to the long gallery at its northern side in order that the preparations in front might not be intruded abruptly on his Majesty, he was conducted straight to the Cabinet Chamber; and so Charles found himself once more midst the happy scenes of his married and domestic life, and surrounded by the

objects of art and science which he had collected with equal care and taste.

Here for the first time his countenance became troubled, and he showed signs of sorrowful depression, proving thereby once more the tenderness of a nature which assuredly had in it many good, great, and generous qualities; and this mood was increased by Colonel Tomlinson informing him, that his Majesty's followers and he himself must there make their adieus, as his commission had ended, and the King was now in charge of Colonels Hacker, Huncks, and Phayer, who waited with a guard and the warrant for his execution, ready to receive him.

Charles was vexed at this arrangement, for he had conceived a very great regard for Colonel Tomlinson, feeling perfect confidence that in his custody no personal indignity would be permitted to him; a consideration about which he had always evinced much anxiety.

He therefore begged eagerly that at all events, the satisfaction of having the colonel's company to the last might be conceded to him as a final indulgence.

An orderly officer was accordingly despatched to the Council appointed to superintend the execution, who were in committee in another part of the Palace; and soon returned with their assent as far

as Colonel Tomlinson and the Bishop were concerned, but an absolute prohibition as to the rest of the King's followers.

These latter therefore came forward, one by one, to take an everlasting leave of their beloved master, who whatever may have been his errors as a Prince, was allowed by all to be the kindest and most indulgent of friends.

Charles bore this ordeal also with surprising magnanimity, for most certainly no selfish feelings darkened the splendour of his last moments ; and far from bewailing his own terrible doom, the King's only care seemed to be to alleviate the sufferings of his broken-hearted attendants as much as lay in his power.

To all and each, and especially to Sir Thomas Herbert, to whom he was greatly attached, and who has left us a most interesting and veracious memoir of those awful moments, he whispered some word of comfort and pointed to some ray of future hope, mingled with abundance of thanks for their chivalrous devotion to a lost cause ; and so kissing and pressing his outstretched hand to their hearts, over and over again, they took a last and mournful "farewell : " and the King turning to Colonels Hacker and Axtell with unflinching eye and unfaltering voice, desired them to "Lead on ! "

But yet another trial, and that one the most

terrible of all that he had that day to undergo, awaited the unhappy Monarch; for what can match the stern, silent, and passionless pause on the brink of Eternity?

Bishop Juxon informed his Majesty in a low voice that certain preparations were not unfortunately completed, and as they would take up half-an-hour, he pressed him to take a little sustenance.

Charles at first declined to do so, saying that he had taken his last meal on earth, but on further importunity he refreshed himself with a slice of bread and a glass of claret, which was readily procured for him by one of the orderly officers; and while he was so engaged, Mr. Seymour arrived post-haste from the Hague with a letter from his son, the Prince of Wales.

The King however, declined to receive it, observing that he did not wish to be further distracted with worldly matters, but sent the Prince his blessing.

His favourite poet has truly said that "Time and the hour runs through the roughest day," and so they did even through that brief record of unparalleled misery; for Colonel Hacker, after some whispering with another official, announced at length "that all was ready."

The King immediately rose from his seat, and with a deliberate step followed the two colonels as

they advanced abreast with drawn swords, across the temporary bridge on to the scaffold; Colonel Tomlinson and Bishop Juxon bringing up the rear. He did not appear in the least daunted at the solemn scene which there burst on his view; the sombre scaffold decked in funereal weeds; the gaunt executioner disguised in hideous mask; the ready block and glittering axe; the stern soldiers glaring out of their helmets like mail-clad statues; and the thousands and tens of thousands of human faces peering out from every window, crevice, rooftop, choked-up alley, street, and courtyard; but scanned it all with a calm and lofty deportment.

Colonel Hacker then briefly informed his Majesty, that if he wished to make any public statement in the way of justification or otherwise, it was open to do so.

Charles replied that such was his intention; and accordingly, in a loud voice and with much dignity of bearing, he began an harangue in which he explained his motives in the struggle with his subjects and the principles which he believed it his duty to uphold; justifying his own conduct in every particular except in the instance of Stafford's execution, which he admitted to be a great fault and crime; and declared, that he considered his own doom as a species of retribution for the unhappy earl's.

"For," said he, "even as I sanctioned an unjust sentence, so do I perish by one!"

And he declared in conclusion with touching pathos, "That he had forgiven all men; even those who were the cause of his death; and prayed that they might repent and receive forgiveness from God." And at Bishop Juxon's suggestion he added, "That he died a Christian according to the profession of the Church of England as he found it left him by his father."

This speech occupied nearly half-an-hour, and though of course it could only have been heard by those in the vicinity of the scaffold, it was attended to with a solemn and thrilling "hush" that was impressive in the highest degree. At its termination, the King knelt and prayed for a few moments; after which he began quietly to unrobe.

He bequeathed his watch to Mr. Ashburnham, and his star and George to Bishop Juxon; and turning to Colonel Tomlinson who stood uncovered with marks of deep sorrow in his countenance, he thanked him in the warmest terms for the kind consideration with which he had performed his duty, and gave him a gold toothpick, which he begged him to keep for his sake; adding, "That it was an unworthy recompense for such gentlemanly and Christianlike demeanour; but that it was all that the King of England had now to bestow."



He then embraced the bishop in the most affectionate manner, and received from the latter a silk skull-cap into which he wound up his long hair.

While this sad greeting was going on, one of the officials in his agitation stumbled against the axe which still lay on the scaffold; this accident made the King turn hastily round with the exclamation, "Touch not the axe! He who hurteth the axe, hurteth me."

Once more embracing his weeping friends and desiring them without the smallest change of countenance, to be comforted, he advanced calmly to the block and explained to the executioner that he would signal to him when to strike by extending his hands, and begged Colonel Hacker to take care that they put him to no unnecessary pain.

He now took a last and steady view of the vast, silent, and motionless multitude, and turning to the bishop, observed,

"I have a good cause and a gracious God on my side."

"There is but one stage more," was the pious reply; "that stage is turbulent and troublesome, but it is a short one. You may consider it will carry you a very great way, even from earth to heaven! And there you will find a great deal of cordial joy and comfort."

"I go," exclaimed the King with the lofty expression of a Saint and Hero in his noble countenance, "from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown! where no disturbance, no manner of disturbance can be!"

He then said to the executioner, "Is my hair well?" to which the other assenting, the King inspected the block, and believing it to be not sufficiently secured to the boards, observed again, "You must set it fast."

"It is fast, sir," replied that official respectfully.

"Then," said Charles, "when I stretch out my hands this way (making the motion), *then——*"

After these remarks he stood for a few moments in front of the block with his hands and eyes uplifted to heaven, murmuring to himself; and then kneeling down, he placed his neck softly on the block; but instantly raising his head again, he cried out to the bishop, "Remember!" and immediately replaced it as before. The suddenness of this action however had somewhat disturbed his hair, and the executioner who stood ready axe in hand beside the royal victim, put forth his hand to rearrange it; no doubt from a sense of humanity lest it should impede his blow and so increase the pain of death.

But the King feeling his touch and thinking he

was going to strike, without moving his position called out anxiously,

“Not yet! not yet! wait for the sign.”

And so for a very few brief, terrible seconds, the King continued kneeling and motionless. At length, he gave the signal agreed upon, and the axe flashed like a meteor through the air!

A deadened “thud” was heard: blood spurted forth in crimson torrents; and the King’s head rolled on the scaffold!

The Executioner immediately held up the head by the long flowing brown hair, now drenched with blood, and exhibited it to the People, crying aloud in a voice harsher than the tempest’s breath, “Behold the head of the Tyrant, Traitor, and Murderer, Charles Stuart!” No actual word or sign of dissent or approbation followed the announcement: the same chilling and solemn silence was at first universally maintained; but presently, there stole aloft a wild wailing note; as if the pent up sorrow of thousands of human hearts had sighed forth their agony into one long, mournful well-remembered moan!

The Deed however was done: the Destiny of the Royal Victim was accomplished; and erroneous as had been his path below, he had given by his noble fortitude and magnanimous submission, one more Example, how men may even at the latest moment

in the "last scene of all," redeem the Past, and enlist the sympathies of admiring and forgiving Posterity. And so the multitude gradually dispersed; the troops were withdrawn; the scaffold was removed; and ere night had spread her dark mantle over the sorrowing city, no evidence remained of the terrible scene, which will awe and instruct many an unborn generation and appal and restrain many a royal sybarite, but some reddened sawdust in front of the ancient palace of England's Royal Race!

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Although the author is unwilling to intrude his personal opinions on the reader, he cannot omit recording in this place some "historical doubts" which have long disturbed his mind; and which much affect the consideration due to the great spirits who, after winning "liberty" in the field at the point of the sword, established a retributive precedent which will tell heavily against those hereditary privileges which their owners have coolly assumed are founded on the "grace of God," but which the world *are beginning* to infer from their results would be better estimated at all events as "the *right* divine to do *wrong*." It has been, we must premise, very generally asserted, and as generally accepted, that during the King's trial, and in the interval between his condemnation and death, he was treated with brutal and disgusting inhumanity. The instances commemorative of that supposition are three in number, and are certainly as damnatory if true as any events of a similar nature that are to be found in our own or in foreign histories—to wit, that of a soldier spitting unrebuked in his face as he left the court on the day of his condemnation; that of other soldiers (*and they belonging to his own guard*) intruding into his bedroom on the same day, and puffing the smoke of their pipes (it being well known how offensive the odour of tobacco was to the fallen monarch) into his face; and that

again of their intrusion on his privacy being so persistent and indelicate, as actually to interfere with the performance of the offices of nature!

These are the principal instances usually quoted, though the list of horrors has received certain additions through the subserviency of artists, and the sycophancy of would-be popular authors.

Now, though the difficulty of proving a negative is manifest, we think we can in this case succeed in doing so to the satisfaction of all impartial persons; and our first progressive step in that direction will be to analyse the evidence not only by which these charges are supported, but in what they originated.

Accordingly we find, in the first place, that they rest solely on testimony which was kept concealed from the world till the Restoration had been effected; and in the next, what is still more suggestive, on that of men who were endeavouring to escape the consequences of participation in rebellion by joining in the calumniation of their more honest and consistent coadjutors. For throughout the Protectorate none of these accusations were ever brought forward by the Royalists; either that portion of them who were in personal attendance on the King, such as Richmond, Hertford, Southampton, Lindsey, Herbert, and Juxon; or by those who, having escaped to foreign parts and there residing in destitution, were naturally more eager still to malign the men who had caused their ruin and banishment. The Queen, too, whose correspondence is still extant, and who must have been exasperated against her husband's destroyers in the utmost degree; the Prince of Wales who, as we have shown, was in direct and uninterrupted communication with his father up to the last moments of his life; the Presbyterian faction, which was on the *qui vive* to pick a hole in the Independent coat,—nowhere allude to these (by them all most desired, because most damaging) conditions to their enemies.

Sir Thomas Herbert, again, in after times published his personal experiences during those terrible moments, and they must have been close indeed, for on the very night preceding his Majesty's execution he slept in the King's sleeping apartment itself, is absolutely mute on circumstances which could not have taken place without his cognizance; and the same significant silence is found in the foreign press of the period, and among

all the republican literature of the day, if it may be so styled ; although the King's trial and execution were fully described and commented on both in Paris and at the Hague, and of course, in a spirit of severe disapprobation, as well as in the "*Mercurius Britannicus*," *The Times* of that age. The memoirs of the regicide Ludlow, and of the celebrated Mrs. Hutchinson, enter also into details which prove the intimate converse of those writers with all that really occurred ; while the sturdy independence of the former, and the humane, feminine, and aristocratic bias of the latter are sure guarantees that such discreditable accusations must be fictitious, or they would have been recorded and honestly objected to by those trustworthy writers.

Sir Purbeck Temple, too, a Royalist of great consideration, and *almost* as remarkable for his virulence towards the Republicans as Clarendon, tells us in his record, that he himself was present in the court on the day the sentence was passed (and he it recollected that this was *the very day assigned to the "spitting episode,"* for fortunately for the sake of truth the calumniators have committed themselves to a *date*), and that on that occasion the soldiery exhibited *so strong a disinclination to insult his Majesty* by calls for "justice, speedy execution," &c., that Colonel Axtell, the commander of the King's guard, was actually obliged to assault them on the spot with his cane, *to induce them to do so* ; and that in fact, he remarked at the time to a noble lord, who was standing beside him, "that out of the whole number only four or five gave vent to insulting and mutinous exclamations."

Now, would this keen and most prejudiced observer have omitted the "spitting episode" had there been the shadow of a foundation for it ?

Look too at the *amazing inconsistency* which prevails throughout these statements ! For here on the one hand we find Sir Purbeck Temple representing the *King's guard* as so disinclined to insult the fallen monarch, that it compelled their commander to prejudice his cause by assaulting them for their humanity in open court ; while on the other, *those very same men*, being the guard appointed to protect and restrain the King during his trial and execution which was an especial one and never changed, are described by other veracious writers as so brutally incensed against him *as to be perpetually puffing smoke in his face, &c. !*

Nor are the characters of the executive government and

leading men, under whose authority that solemn example was made, as well as of the soldiery themselves and the discipline to which the latter were subjected, questions immaterial to this investigation ; as common sense tells us, that such conduct as that under examination are the characteristics of weak governments, profligate and ignorant leaders, and a rude and lawless army. But it is well known that no executive has ever existed in this country so powerful as the one under discussion ; that the chiefs of parties were all, to say the least for them, intelligent, far-seeing men, who consequently were aware that any show of inhumanity towards their prisoner would be the most certain way of prejudicing their cause ; and indeed it is to this very desire of standing well with the world that the *Royalists* used formerly to attribute the King's exemption from assassination ; while the soldiery, as a rule, were notoriously grave, formal, and well-conducted fanatics, much more likely from their habits of life and way of thinking to have harassed his Majesty about the welfare of his soul, than to have indulged in vulgar pot-house insolence towards his person ; and that they were under the most severe and peremptory state of military discipline ever maintained in these islands, is a matter freely admitted by writers of every complexion.

It certainly might here be presumed, argumentatively, that the chiefs of the movement, fearing it might become abortive excepting under the impulse of tumultuous agitation, were *secretly* urging on their humbler supporters to a line of conduct likely to precipitate a violent conclusion ; *but the opposite was precisely the state of affairs* ; for the soldiery from the very conclusion of the civil war were most anxious and resolute to visit the consequences of the struggle on him who they sincerely believed to be its originator and upholder, and it required all the influence of their officers to restrain that absorbing desire in the earlier stages of their communication with his Majesty within disciplinarian bounds.

And now let us turn to the testimony borne by the Royal Sufferer himself on this important issue. That the King was both by temperament and policy a grumbler, is shown by the unfair complaints which he constantly paraded about food, wine, clothing, &c., during his confinement at Carisbrook and Hurst Castles ; and it is well known that he was always particularly

solicitous about the maintenance of his personal dignity ; and lastly, that on the four days of his trial, as well as at his execution, he spoke copiously about his rights and his wrongs ; *and yet we find not one single syllable in his discourses about the maltreatment it is pretended he was at that very time being subjected to.* He was, moreover, a thorough soldier and a severe martinet, and none knew better than he did that the true value of an officer in command is to be estimated, not by his own personal intentions however good they may be, but by the discipline he actually maintains among his followers.

What, then, were his feelings towards the officer who was placed in especial charge of his person from the moment of his arrival in London to the hour of his death, and who had been furnished with a particular and independent warrant for the occasion from the House of Commons, and a picked guard sufficient to uphold its authority ? Did he spurn him with the withering contempt which the officer merits who permits his own men to outrage and insult the prisoner they were appointed to protect ? On the contrary, *in his last moments* on the scaffold itself, and at the termination of his latest appeal to posterity, he thanked Col. Tomlinson in the most touching and tender terms for his unvarying kindness and consideration, and gave him in token of respect and affection his gold toothpick, observing "that it was a poor return for such noble conduct, but was all the King of England had left to offer." And it must be kept in mind, moreover, that the *last favour* he condescended to ask from his enemies was, that this very person (Colonel Tomlinson)—whose duty as a man, a soldier, a Christian, and a gentleman would have been to have perished sword in hand in the endeavour to screen his Royal Prisoner from the revolting horrors to which, it is asserted, he was constantly exposed—" *might remain beside him until all was over,*" giving as a reason for the request, "*that he felt assured no indignity would be offered to him while the colonel was near his person !*" and, in short, it was on these notorious and admitted grounds that Tomlinson was exempted from prosecution at the restoration of the Stuart dynasty.

Reader, I ask you simply, can anything be more conclusive than this single fact, even if none other could be offered ?

In *what* then, is the next question we shall attempt to answer, did these shameless calumnies originate ?



The first trace we can discover of the most dramatic of the three principal charges—viz., the soldier spitting in the King's face on his return from Westminster Hall, is in the evidence of one Holland Simpson, a witness on the trial of Hugh Peters, the celebrated Independent divine, after the restoration of Charles the Second of *blessed memory*, as many Royalist historians entitle that brave, virtuous, and honourable prince. This man seems to have followed the calling of a tapster in the Vinery, and was brought forward by the government prosecutors, in the dearth we presume of more respectable evidence, to establish the case against the accused, and he stated as follows *ad litteram*, *vide* Trials of the Regicides :

"The King was at the bar at the same time, whereupon, my lord, the soldiers did cry out the same (this alludes to the calls for 'justice! justice!') and as the King was taken away to Sir Robert Cotton's, some of them spit in the King's face, but he took out his handkerchief, wiped it off, and (*credat Judæus*) smiled.

*Now these are the sole, as well as the original grounds, on which this distinct and particular accusation rests*; for out of the tens and hundreds of thousands who were present, no other individual has testified to an action so utterly brutal, unmanly, and we will add, un-English, that once witnessed it could never have been forgotten; while the affirming of the same would have been the surest passport to the favour of the masters of the situation! And it is here worthy of record, that although no one could be found bold enough to confirm the statement of this low fellow, Simpson, *historians* (God save the mark!) have taken considerable pains to improve and embellish it by adding, "that another soldier, on observing this disgraceful action, could not refrain from exclaiming, 'God bless you, sir;' but was immediately caned for this exhibition of good feeling by his superior officer, which brought on the calm and philosophic remark from his Majesty, "that the punishment was surely too severe for the offence."

We must here appeal to the reader's own common sense to decide, even if this charge had been supported by a more respectable witness, whether it does not bear a melodramatic colouring which is very suspicious? Is it in short, in human nature or physical nerves, to submit benignantly to sudden personal insults of the

most aggravating and indecent character? Martyrs, we know, have smiled in the midst of their tortures; but the flames and the occasion gave dignity to their sufferings, and time, opportunity for preparation. All those conditions were wanting here: there was indeed just their opposites; and the idea of Charles, who in fact was a man of a very irritable temperament, as evinced by his striking Colonel Hammond with his cane on a very slight provocation and most punctiliously solicitous about his personal dignity, *smiling at such a moment*, seems to us about as probable as that Mr. Bright would smile blandly on having his nose unexpectedly tweaked by some frenzied member of the Carlton towards the fag-end of a *mild* debate on the ballot!

And now, pray, let us inquire *where* Colonel Tomlinson and Sir Thomas Herbert were at that critical moment, and how was it that Charles and all those we have above enumerated never made the slightest allusion to this unparalleled atrocity?

We know, then, *positively*, that at the *very moment* this most infamous outrage is said to have taken place, the King was walking *between* Colonel Tomlinson and Sir Thomas Herbert. Now did the former, as in duty bound, personally resent it on the spot at every risk, or did he even officially protest against it to his superiors afterwards? We *know* that he did nothing of the sort; for had he done so, some trace of his manliness must have remained on the official records of the government which were found intact at the Restoration, and also in the memories of the thousands of spectators in whose sight it is pretended the transaction occurred. *And was it then, for this base, sneaking, and cowardly abstention, that the haughty monarch, outraged in his keenest susceptibilities, thanked the colonel in his last moments in the most touching manner, eulogising his behaviour in the same breath as gentlemanly and Christianlike in the extreme?*

Again, did Sir Thomas Herbert (the stanchest of Royalists), in his published and very minute account of all those transactions, make *any* allusion to the one under analysis? On the contrary, he not only ignores its actuality by damnatory silence, but succinctly states, that the soldiery through whom Charles passed "remained silent, while many of the spectators wept and prayed!" *And yet the spittle which is asserted to have desecrated his master's face must almost have fallen upon his own person, so close were they together at the time; and the very work in which the*

*episode ought to have been recorded, if it had really occurred, was prominently brought forward after the Restoration, when the tide of reaction was flowing with remunerating force over the entire surface of English society !*

With reference to the remaining two charges adverted to in the beginning of this note, we have been unable to discover *any contemporary or respectable authority for them whatever* ; and they seem to have grown up, like other venomous weeds, under the fostering care of royal and aristocratic reaction. But we must not overlook the fact as bearing collaterally on the question, that the House of Commons voted *nem. con.* £500 (a sum equal to £2000 of our present money), for the expenses of the King's interment ; inasmuch as it *proves* that every detail of those solemn and important transactions was regulated by a spirit of dignified decorum, as free from vulgar virulence as it was from disparaging turbulence. Contrast this single circumstance with the indecent, cowardly, and unchristian exposure of the Great Protector's remains on a gibbet when "the right divine to do wrong" had once more come into operation !

In which unholy exhumation, by the way, those "oily men of God" the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, took a most acrimonious lead, as might have been expected from the antecedents of ecclesiastical polity in all countries and ages ; for when did a priesthood ever forget or forgive ? In this instance indeed they originated the whole scheme by a fulsome petition to Parliament.

In conclusion, we respectfully affirm once more, that not one single syllable of these transparent calumnies is anywhere traceable during the glorious epoch of the Protectorate : when however, *the lion was dead, the jackals began to yelp !*

Pause then, reader, we pray thee, and examine *the issue impartially and independently* before you accept such damnable conclusions against the Founders of Civil and Religious Liberty, and that too at the hands of their most unworthy and most unscrupulous enemies.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

*Chamberlain.*—Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It holds correct that I told you yesternight. There's a franklin in the wild of Kent hath brought three hundred marks with him in gold: I heard him tell it to one of his company last night at supper: a kind of auditor—one that hath abundance of charges too, God knows what. They are up already, and call for eggs and butter: they will away presently.

*Gadshill.*—Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas' clerks, I'll give thee this neck.—SHAKESPEARE.

It was on a gloomy afternoon in the autumn succeeding the King's execution, that a lady and gentleman were seen promenading in a small garden bordering the extensive forest of Epping. In it stood a pretty picturesque little cottage which seemed made to be the abode of peace and contentment, and yet to judge from the gesticulations of the promenaders it was sometimes disturbed by darker passions.

"I care not! I care not! I have sworn fidelity to him in the presence of God," cried the lady vehemently, "and my heart has sealed the vow

with love. And never ! never ! will I forget that vow, though all the world desert him, and—and—scorn at me !”

“ But Marie,” said her companion, who was the foreigner so much mixed up with Captain Sedley in the early part of this work, “ you know not the desperate pass at which we have all arrived. Now *do* listen for a moment. In the first place, the King’s death has completed the fall of the Royalist faction ; so there is no hope of Ralph Sedley’s advancement through that channel during this generation at all events. And even if so great an improbability did take place as a legitimate restoration, he would not *now* reap the advantage from it which we calculated on——”

“ Say rather, which *you* calculated on,” interrupted the beautiful brunette, fiercely ; “ for I repudiated all such vile selfishness with horror from the very first !”

“ Well,” continued the count, with a sneer, “ which *I* calculated on ; inasmuch as I have it on good authority that Lord Hazlebeech, the kinsman who stands between him and the family title and estate, has made his peace with the new King and joined him at Brussels ; and that Sedley has exhausted every resource, including your own little property, and that *I* am as utterly bankrupt in purse as I am according to the saintly estimate in

character, is too well known to you to require repetition."

"And do you expect me to abandon the man I idolize, because he is unfortunate? If so, with all your subtlety, you know little of woman's nature."

"No, not abandon him, Marie," replied the count, coaxingly; "but merely to suspend relations with him for awhile till our prospects mend. In fact, we shall be driven to do so ere long; for, look you here, it is known to those who rule now, that Sedley is banded with some desperate Cavaliers for the purpose of striking a daring blow for revenge and loyalty. Nothing less indeed, than the assassination of old Noll himself; and he would by this time have been in limbo, *en route* to ——" (he touched his neck significantly), "if they were not sure that the bird was well limed. Now I appeal to your good sense, if it would not be best for him to make his escape while he can to the Continent, and push his fortunes at the young King's Court, leaving us to watch events in this country? For here, I *believe* (he mused for an instant), I *may* pick up the thread of fortune once more; but *there* I am out of the ruck as I am at outrance with the Stuart."

"But why can't I accompany him?" said the lady, poutingly.

"In what capacity?" sneered the gentleman; "for, with all his boasted affection, he has not made you the *amende honorable*."

"It matters not!" said poor Marie, holding down her blushing face, while the tears that rose in her eyes contradicted her words. "Some motive of family pride perhaps intervenes, added to almost insuperable ecclesiastical difficulties, for our religious professions are antagonistic; but he loves me truly, notwithstanding, and I am certain sure will never abandon me!"

"He did so once, however."

"Never!" she replied, her bright eyes flashing fire. "Never! My own unfounded jealousy and your cruel devices coming together at a period when loyalty demanded his presence here, did indeed bring about a short separation. And it is the remembrance of that melancholy period that puts me on my guard against your *friendly* interest in our affairs now."

"It's time lost, as usual, talking to you; but Sedley is not a bad fellow, or a bad card either should the game take a turn, and I should like to put him on his guard against the Philistines. Which way does he ride home to-night? as I'll try and meet him on my way back to town; for the matter is much more serious than you will credit."

"Oh, he returns by the moated Grange; as for

particular reasons he makes a wide *detour* at night."

"Farewell then, dearest Marie," said the count, coolly attempting to take her hand.

The proud beauty merely acknowledged his adieus with a contemptuous toss of her head ; but when he was out of hearing, she clasped her hands, and exclaimed in agonizing accents :—

"Oh God ! oh God ! What have I done that my destiny should be bound up in that bad man's ?"

Count Latour however, who troubled himself about the opinions of others as little as any man living, took no notice of her obvious disgust, but stept jauntily into the little cottage, his horse being tethered to the porch on the other side, and after a minute or two he issued into the road and mounted.

"Come, Machiavel," said he, tapping the neck of his nag, an animal of extraordinary bone and breeding, "put your best leg foremost, for there is work to-night which would suit your namesake well." So saying, he spurred into the forest.

About an hour later, a large roomy carriage, such as were then in use amongst persons of consideration, was seen slowly wending its weary way on the borders of the dangerous and solitary Heaths, which beginning about the village of



Hounslow, stretched westward almost to Salisbury Plains.

The cumbersome vehicle, with its numerous boots and wells for holding food and property, and its great weight, size, and accommodation, looked more like a family ark built for navigation than a locomotive intended to be propelled by horse power ; and indeed it was pretty clear, that the four stout greys who dragged it along at the rate of five miles an hour were labouring under a strong sense of unfair play.

It was escorted by half a dozen well-armed and well-mounted serving men, whose military setting up showed that they had tasted powder on nobler fields ; and as the evening closed in, they proved their training by throwing out a vidette in front, and examining the priming of their pistols.

Nor were these precautions unnecessary, for they were entering a region the evil fame of which was a byeword amongst travellers, as it was haunted by the "Wild Riders" whose deeds of violence were the terror of the country ; while even the scenery itself was suggestive of danger and solitude in the highest degree.

The grey Moorland stretched out its desolation far and wide, without the smallest variation of shade or colour to relieve the straining eye, or tree, barrow, or habitation to mitigate its unbroken

monotony; and the only points in its vast and withered expanse on which Hope itself could seize, were here and there in the distance a few sandy hillocks of uniform shape and barren aspect.

Not a bird or animal or human being; not a single head of cattle ranging wide on venture, or pilfering crow returning from distant foray, gave momentary animation to its silent horrors; while the skies, faintly lighted on the evening in question by a hazy autumnal sun, suspended just above the horizon like a lamp whose oil is exhausted—so pale and ineffectual were its rays, so motionless its appearance—reflected back its melancholy hues with leaden and sympathetic dullness.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks to cheerfulness, the party within the carriage, consisting of an old couple and a pretty damsel, were in the happiest mood, for they were returning Home: that word of promise to all true English hearts!

“I tell thee what, Nelly,” said the old gentleman; “I have made up my mind to remove the Dairy Farm below the Willow Copse for shelter during the winter months: and it will be more convenient, too, in the way of looking after it, as I find I can’t walk as well as I used to do before I tasted so much of that plaguy London smoke.”

“True, father,” replied Mistress Nelly; “and

then it will be within view of my own little room ; so I shall be able to see my pets feeding."

"I wonder," said the old knight, laughing, "I wonder whether that old rascal Bowles tipples as much as ever? He always was a thirsty soul, that's certain."

"Old boughs," chimed in Dame Thornton oracularly, "are hard to bend."

"I have news," said Mistress Nelly, "that will rejoice pretty Cicely, his daughter ; and that is, the discharge of her lover Dick from his regiment. Dear Harry obtained it from the Lord-General a few days ago ; and Dick," she added archly, "merely I suppose from gratitude to us, volunteered forthwith to command our escort home."

There was a short silence, for they all were thinking of the same thing ; and presently there came a tell-tale sigh from poor Mistress Nelly, as she looked hard out of the window.

"Pshaw !" said Sir Jaspar, putting his large brown hand caressingly on his daughter's shoulder ; "pshaw, girl ! Be of better cheer, for all will go well yet. Ralph Sedley is not the man to be on the wrong tack all his days. Gadzooks, I always loved the lad, and I'll be bound for him he's sound at bottom."

"Nay," said Dame Thornton, with mighty

prudery ; "these are easy terms, Jaspar, for such evil doings."

"Wine and Women," said the old knight with a jolly air but trying to look decorously severe, "are the ruin of us all ; and these foreign cattle are as tenacious as Scotch beggars. Besides, Ralph may have some scruples of honour in favour even of such a light o' heels as this poor creature, and couldn't as a man let her drift unprotected down the stream : and I confess for one," he added bluffly, "that I should despise him if he had not. But he is a brave boy, and a good one too at bottom ; and I'll warrant he comes round some day."

"I really do not think," persisted the dame, drawing herself up with awful dignity, "that I could under any circumstances whatever permit any daughter of mine to entertain——"

"Gadzooks !" interrupted the knight in a merry tone, "you shan't entertain us any more with that sauce ! Why, dame, didn't I say and can you deny it, that women rule the world ? that is to say, that we poor men are governed by our mates ?"

"You should be the last to say that, Jaspar," replied the dame, softened and smiling, "for you have ever been both mate and master too."

Sir Jaspar answered this retort by pressing the hand of his aged partner, and was about to add something, when at this moment a horseman

muffled in a wide riding-cloak passed the carriage at a hand-gallop, peering as he went by inquisitively into it, but endeavouring at the same time to conceal his own features.

Mistress Nelly, who was pretending to be very much interested in the landscape, but who was in fact listening anxiously to the conversation of her parents, gave a slight scream as the stranger passed.

"Why, what's the matter, Nelly?" cried her father. "Didst mistake yon horseman for a 'Wild Rider'?"

"Oh! no, no, no, father!"

"Well, child, then what made you cry out as if frightened?"

"I know not," replied the young lady in great agitation, "whether the conversation suggested the idea, but when that Cavalier looked so boldly into the carriage I marked well his features in spite of his efforts to hide them, and—and—they were the features—"

"Of who, in the name of Heaven?" cried the impatient knight.

"Of—of—Ralph Sedley," replied poor Nelly, restraining her tears with difficulty.

"Pooh! pooh, child," said her father, laughing, "it could not be so, and your fancy or some passing likeness has misled you. Ah! Nelly, your imagi-

nation is still haunted by Ralph's jolly handsome face ; and I do not wonder at it, for in the main he is a good lad and a merry, and I love him after all as if he were my own boy."

Mistress Nelly made no reply, but nestled towards her father in an affectionate way ; and it was fortunate for her maidenly dignity perhaps, that the darkness prevented the pretty smile and blush which welcomed the old knight's last observation from being more generally marked.

By this time the shadows of evening had closed around the travellers, and Sir Jaspar remarked that they had made less progress than he had anticipated, as he had hoped to have cleared the neighbourhood of the baiting house before dusk, for it had an indifferent name on the road.

"But, our dame," said he, humorously, "has so filled the coach with her London finery that the horses can hardly get along."

"Fie on you, Jaspar, to say so," retorted his wife. "You well know it is the family plate and jewels which we took up to London at the beginning of these troubles that has lumbered us up, and no gala dresses of mine. And for the matter of that, Jaspar, you owe me some recompense in lieu of the double-piled velvet paduasay court robe which I should have had—"

"Had there been a Court to dazzle," interposed

Sir Jaspar. "Well, well, dame, I pledge you the word of a true knight that you shall have your bravery on my next birthday; will that content you?"

"Nay, it must, Jaspar," replied Dame Thornton only half pacified.

In half an hour more the coach stopped before a large, low-roofed, gable-ended house built of grey stone, and surrounded by a deep moat which was now dry; but like most solitary houses at that period, it was strongly barred, and the drawbridge which crossed the fosse was already drawn up for the night. It required some shouting to rouse the inmates; at length a rough-looking man with a shock head of red hair appeared lanthorn in hand and lowered the drawbridge, during which operation Sir Jaspar Thornton vented his impatience in no measured terms.

"Why what sort of welcome is this, you sluggard? And what is the name of this badger's hole?"

"It's styled by them, honoured sir, as stands on particularities, 'The Moated Grange;' but to them as harbours sentiments, it's known as 'Huffy's Rest.'"

"Huffy's Rest," ran on the garrulous knight; "well, it has a drowsy look; sleeps he soundly?"

"Umph!" answered the other; "none sounder I'se warrant; though he was a lively lad in his day

and a kindly too. This way, worthy sir ; this way, gentlemen ; though many have turned their backs on poor Huffy since his misfortune. This way, worthy gentlemen ; but it's the way of the world, it's the way of the world."

Muttering in this manner their strange guide showed them into a large stone hall, and motioning them with grotesque ceremony to seat themselves at a large oak table on which he had placed a couple of coarse candles, he soon covered it with better fare than could have been expected in such an out-of-the-way corner.

"Gadzooks !" cried the jovial knight, "a chine of cold beef, a mighty venison pasty, good cakes and cheese, and gallons of mellow ale, is not fare to be despised by gentle or simple. So summon all our good men and true, and we'll share and share alike like buenos camarados."

Accordingly, the travellers and their escort were soon gathered round the supper table doing ample justice to the viands, for the cold air of the heath was provocative of appetite ; and the waiter saying that he and Giles must look after the nags, presently shuffled out of the room.

"There must have been guests of consideration here lately," said the dame dubiously. "Such fare argues good payment."

"Hum—ha—" replied Sir Jaspar trying to look



unconcerned. "The vension is too sweet, I fear, to be honestly got."

"Listen!" said Mistress Nelly, who began to feel an indefinite sort of alarm. "Surely that is the galloping of a horse."

They all listened, and certainly what seemed the footsteps of a horse died rapidly away in the distance.

"Some benighted traveller no doubt," observed the knight, glancing at the sergeant of the escort; "but no matter, we are a goodly company, and we'll join in a brimming stirrup-cup to the good old saw, 'Confusion to all rogues,' and then to horse like honest men."

The company drained their cups; the escort mounted their horses; the ladies wrapping themselves in their mantles settled themselves in opposite corners of the coach; and Sir Jaspar paying the bill handsomely, took his usual chatty leave of the sentimental servitor of "Huffy's Rest."

"The night grows apace, good host," said he, "and the roads are somewhat illegible. Hast sign-posts on the Heath?"

"There is *one*, worthy sir, on the left hand," replied the Caliban of the Moated Grange solemnly, with a very peculiar emphasis, "that *ought* to be a caution. But," he muttered to himself, "it's the

way of the world, and we must all on when the devil drives."

"Dick Harty," said the knight to the young sergeant in a low voice, "let your men look to their priming, and keep well together round the coach; and mind send out a couple of scouts in front; and tell the lads to drive their best, for we are now entering the 'Debateable Land.'"

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the sergeant, and gave his orders accordingly; and Sir Jaspar ensconcing himself once more beside his wife, the cavalcade moved on at a smart pace.

They had not proceeded far, when the knight who was unusually restless, exclaimed,

"Well, here's the Sign-post at last!"

But the darkness, as well as the sentimental admirer of "Poor Huffy" had deceived him, and when the coach approached nearer, he saw with horror that the object he had taken for the Sign-post was in fact a gibbet with its grim tenant swaying and creaking in the night-wind.

Shuddering involuntarily, Sir Jaspar drew his cloak tightly round him and threw himself back in his seat; and a constitution which had hitherto been proof against "all the ills to which flesh is heir," stood him in such good stead, that he soon gave loud tokens of having joined his wife and daughter in peaceful slumber.

How long they had slept, none could say, when the whole party were startled into activity by a loud discharge of fire-arms, followed by groans and the clashing of swords; and they immediately comprehended that they were surrounded by a number of masked and mounted men, who were assailing their escort with loud cries of "Down with the Regicides!"

Sir Jaspar Thornton, who had been bred a soldier and was as brave as steel, hastened to take down his long rapier which hung across the roof of the carriage, and throwing the door wide open, was soon hurrying to the assistance of their escort who appeared to be very much overmatched, heedless of the screams and entreaties of his wife and daughter.

The poor old dame indeed clung to him fondly with all her might, crying,

"You are too old, Jaspar, for this desperate work! Oh! stay and comfort us!"

"Nay, dame," replied the gallant old knight, "I am a gentleman! and a gentleman is never too old to do his duty!" Saying which he threw himself so resolutely on the nearest ruffian, that he succeeded in striking him from his horse, and being a perfect master of his fence, he held two others fairly at bay.

This reinforcement however came not before it

was needed, for the skirmish had commenced most unfortunately for the travellers.

Just as they reached a long sandy hillock, which appeared to lie exactly across their front as they advanced, but which proved to form the point at which the road turned almost off at right angles, a volley of musketry was fired suddenly upon them by a band that had lain concealed behind it, which emptied two saddles and severely wounded some of the post-horses; and the sergeant had hardly time to call on his men to "Rally round" when the escort were charged sword-in-hand by a score of well-armed men. Still the unexpected onslaught of the old knight created a diversion for the time, and with the spirited efforts of Dick Harty, might eventually have turned the scales altogether, but for as cowardly a deed as ever disgraced humanity.

The leader of the assailants, who rather directed the struggle than mixed personally in it, keeping a little aloof as it were, having it is presumed marked the stimulating effects of Sir Jasper Thornton's onset, slipped suddenly off his horse, and creeping under the coach from the outer side emerged on the inner between its open door and the good knight as he stood stiffly engaged, and deliberately raising his petronel shot him through the back.

The brave old man fell forward on his face stone

dead ; and his late opponents joining those who were hard pressing Harty and his remaining comrades, soon placed the former *hors de combat*, and drove the latter to seek safety in flight.

It would be utterly impossible for words to describe the feelings of the wife and daughter at seeing their loved and aged relative so foully slain. The poor dame indeed had made a most desperate effort to intercept the felon blow, by literally precipitating herself on the assassin from the carriage ; but it was too late : and now as she sat on the bare earth with her husband's head in her lap, and covering his pallid features with kisses, sobbed aloud in agony, " Oh, Hubby ! dear Hubby ! speak to me ! speak to me ! " even the wild ruffians who had participated in his murder seemed moved to some sort of pity if not contrition, and whispered hoarsely to each other, " Hurt not the poor women."

Their leader however remained as composed and unconcerned as before, and making some sneering remark as to the fate which he trusted awaited all regicides, directed some of his men to secure the plate and jewellery while those of his party who were wounded proceeded in advance across the heath ; and above all things he cautioned them to make sure that none of their own broken

weapons or clothing were left behind, and so come to be used as testimony against them.

All these matters having been rapidly but carefully attended to, he inquired once more in a feigned voice—

“Are you all perfectly certain that you have dropped nothing by which we may be traced or identified?”

“Quite certain,” was the general response.

“Then ho! for the greenwood tree,” was his reply, “with merry hearts; for if the bloody wolf has this time escaped us, we have at all events squared accounts with the parasite fox!” and without deigning a glance of sympathy at his sorrowing victims, he led the way at a smart pace across the desolate moorlands.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HOME! SWEET HOME!

I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled  
Above the green trees, that a cottage was near ;  
And I said to myself, if there's peace in the world  
For the heart that's humble, it surely is here.

*Old Song.*

ON the morning after the sad occurrence we have just detailed, the most alarming and extraordinary rumours began to disturb once more the digestion of the good citizens of London.

At first it was reported that a general rising of the Royalists had taken place and that they were marching on London ; then that a plot had been discovered against the life of the Lord General ; and again, that an attempt had actually been made to assassinate him on Hounslow Heath on his return from Windsor : and finally, men whispered about with bated breath, that a troop of desperate Cavaliers who were lying out on the bleak moorlands for the purpose above hinted at, had accidentally encountered a party of belated travellers,

and these turning out to be Sir Jaspar Thornton and his family, they had in their bitter animosity towards the regicide colonel of the Ironsides and disappointment at the escape of their greater enemy, frantically set upon his father and cruelly murdered the honoured old knight.

As the day wore on, names too began to be banded about; and the one oftenest implicated was that of the wild and daring Captain Sedley.

At length these rumours assumed an air of consistency, and it was understood that the last version was the correct one, and that warrants had been issued for the capture of Sedley and other well-known conspirators.

The evening which was ushered in by these dismal rumours, found however the merry and sanguine object of all these calumnies quietly seated by a cheery fire in his little cottage at Eppingdale, smoking hopefully the pipe of contentment, and building most unsubstantial castles in the air. Before him stood a foaming tankard of brown October, and nestling beside him on a low stool, sat a fairy form more beautiful than the Peri who sighed at the gates of Paradise, watching the expression of his handsome face with anxiety and devotion beaming from her dark, dreamy, loving eyes.

"It's perfectly absurd talking in that manner,



Marie," said the Cavalier with an air of profound sagacity; "for you don't understand the measure of political questions, and your fears outrun your reason. I tell you our plans are good plans, and must eventually succeed."

"Eventually succeed! and how are we to exist meanwhile, dear Ralph? Our gold pieces can be numbered without the counting; and oh! the danger to your life drives me almost distracted! Be ruled then, sweetheart, and give up a lost and desperate cause."

"Oh, hang the danger! but the money is a more serious matter I admit. Now suppose me content to be guided by you, what course would this wise little head advise?" he replied, patting her curls playfully.

"That we should for the present take refuge in Naples, the land of song and poetry, where, vanity apart, I would undertake our maintenance by my musical talents."

This proposition, though made with the utmost simplicity, seemed to grate unpleasantly on the proud Cavalier's mind. He mused for a moment, and then had recourse to his old comforter.

"But look here, darling," said he, putting down the tankard; "on the other side of the picture. If we succeed in ridding the world of that infernal scoundrel, old Noll, and one lucky blow would do

it, the King would certainly enjoy his own again ; for he is the very keystone on which rests the bloody fabric which those hypocritical villains call a Commonwealth ; and then, ho ! for the Cavaliers !”

“ Ah, Ralph ; but is he one to be caught in a trap like a simple noddy ? My woman’s wit tells me on the contrary, that he possesses courage and abilities to preserve what he has so unscrupulously won.”

“ Oh ! as to that, I don’t suppose he fears the devil himself ! and I am sure he is twice as sly. But isn’t that the more reason for aiming especially at the murdering, black-hearted regicide ? However, that our plans are good plans, know that we missed the old fox last night by a mere chance. He never travels the same road twice running, and never returns by the road he went ; but we have good intelligence of his movements ; and learning that he was on his way up to London from Windsor, a jolly troop of us rendezvoused on Hounslow Heath to give him a warm welcome. The old rascal, however, dodged us by crossing the river at Staines and coming round by Sudbury and Hammersmith, and so we missed him, as I said before.”

“ And you missed the count, too, for he said he would ride that way round in order to meet

you, and talk to you more earnestly than I can on the necessities of our position."

"Umph!" growled the Cavalier, "and what has *he* to say about it?"

"He advises that you should join the young King at Brussels, and—and——"

"And, what, Marie?"

"And that it would be as well that we should part for a little while, inasmuch as my presence might prove a drag on your prospects at Court." She looked up wistfully at him as she threw out this feeler.

But the Cavalier's honest nature, wild as was his temperament, could not brook such worldly counsel.

"Just the sort of advice I should have expected from his cold, cynical heart," said he; "and I confess I am getting thoroughly sick of his constant meddling in our affairs and his vile and unmanly opinions. Even supposing for the sake of argument, that it might be as he pretends, and that your presence *would* be detrimental to my advancement, could anything be more dishonourable than to propose a separation on such selfish grounds?"

Poor Marie made no reply, but pressed his hand to her heart, and then hid her face on his knee.

"I am not straightlaced, God knows," continued

the vehement Cavalier, "but saving your presence, Sweet Pet, I confess I despise that man more and more every day! and I begin to suspect that he is much worse than we have any idea of; in short, that he is nothing more or less now than a professed blackleg and common cutpurse. Ah! you may look, but I assure you some queer stories are going the rounds of the taverns about him. Only the other night, when we were all playing at Aaron's Hell, a gentleman who had served his Majesty asserted positively that a valuable diamond brooch which the count displayed ostentatiously on his collar, belonged to him, and that he had been relieved of the same with his watch and purse some three months before on Hampstead Heath. Certainly the count protested that he had purchased it lately of a Jew in the Minorities; but when the other insisted on proceeding forthwith to the Israelite's dwelling, Monsieur le Comte shuffled out of the scrape by surrendering the jewel under pretence of not doubting the claimant's honour. This concession stopped all further investigation to be sure, but the company looked uncommonly askance at our would-be Mentor; and to make a clean breast of it, we have all remarked how well mounted he always is, and how much and how late he seems to infest the highroads in the neighbourhood of London. Now considering his circumstances,

and that he is not one of *us*, both these facts have an ugly aspect."

When Ralph Sedley commenced these reflections Marie looked satisfied and reassured, but during the recital of the brooch controversy, which was done with great bitterness, she held down her head in confusion ; at its conclusion, however, she raised her eyes to his and said with a spasmodic effort—

"I fear he is unprincipled enough for anything ! and one advantage, dear Ralph, of a residence in Naples would be the certainty of being rid of him altogether."

"Why are you so sure of that ?"

"The precise reasons I do not know : but bit by bit I have gradually learnt, that he has some strong objections to returning to Italy."

She mused for a few moments, gazing mournfully into the fire ; and as Sedley watched her beautiful face with all a lover's fondness, an expression of deep remorse rose in his own ; for he felt, that though he had cherished her with boundless affection, he had not behaved towards her as a man of honour.

In the first burst of her confiding tenderness—the love of southern climes passionate and overwhelming—he had, under a solemn pledge of marriage, taken advantage as formerly hinted, of her

youth and innocence ; and though with a self-sacrifice consonant to her generous disposition she had refrained from urging the performance of his pledge, he well knew that its delay filled her mind with painful reflections ; and it now suddenly struck him, that the remarks which she had made in the early part of their conversation about her presence being a drawback to him, were but a gentle and modest way of reminding him of its non-fulfilment.

The Cavalier had been a wild liver, but a kinder-hearted man never was created ; some of his friends indeed went so far as to say, that this very softness of disposition was the fertile source of all his errors. Nor would it be quite fair to him to omit the very great difficulties there existed at that period to a matrimonial connexion between a Papist and a Protestant. In fact, he had made many efforts to overcome them at different times ; was always *proposing* to do so ; but hitherto they had proved insurmountable.

However, be these things as they may, Ralph Sedley began to be moved by one of his constantly recurring fits of conscientious affection ; and when at length he marked a tear roll down poor Marie's pretty cheek he could no longer contain himself, and so passing his hand through her long raven ringlets, he whispered softly,

"You are sad, darling, and dissatisfied with naughty, rattling Ralph?"

"No, Ralph," she replied with a sob, "I am not: and why should I be? You are kinder to me, I am sure, than I deserve."

"I am not; I am not! And you have good cause for complaint, Sweet Pet!"

And so saying, the Cavalier drew her towards him gently, poor Marie endeavouring ineffectually to suppress her grief; and at length she was seated sobbing on his knee, with her head resting on his shoulder.

"I *ought* to be happy, Ralph," she murmured, "for I *am sure* you love me."

"Oh, beautiful darling!" he exclaimed covering her lips and hands with caresses, "better than words can tell! and so kisses must! and I am a villain not to have done you justice ere now! But I swear by the honour of a gentleman that I will take immediate steps to make you my wife before man and God. And harkee, pretty sweetheart! Father Mahon is over here from France, and is at this present time in hiding at Walthamstow; and to-morrow I will hasten to find out the good man and secure his services; and so," he added, laughing and caressing her again, "become your slave for life."

"But believe me, Ralph! never for one moment

have I doubted your plighted faith. No, no, no ! I have rested with boundless confidence on this kind and generous heart," and she nestled her head on his bosom ; " for True Love neither trembles nor does it change. Oh, my own, my own dear Ralph ! you shall see no more tears, no more sorrow from your little Marie."

And so the children of Gentle Passion sat by their humble but happy fireside gazing into each other's eyes, loving and loved.

And the Cavalier's mercurial spirits rose again rapidly, and he began once more to chalk out plans of future happiness in such glowing and improbable colours, as made pretty Marie smile through her tears, and imagine herself in her affectionate enthusiasm as appointed by Heaven itself to take charge of one so simple-minded and impulsive.

These hopeful dreams were presently interrupted by the trampling of horses' feet, and it was evident from the clatter they made that there were more riders than one ; and soon followed a loud knocking at the door.

Sedley came at once to the conclusion that some discovery had taken place of the conspiracy in which he was engaged to cut off Cromwell, and he knew that in that case he had no quarter to expect : but he was a man naturally of daring courage, and had passed through a life of such constant and



desperate risks, that no emergency was too startling for his nerves.

Accordingly he began to take those precautions which his long experience in intrigue suggested, with a coolness little to be expected from one of his careless and ardent disposition ; and well was he seconded by his courageous and devoted little partner.

" Marie ! " cried the Cavalier, " run and keep the rogues at bay as long as you can under pretence of unwillingness to open the door so late at night during my absence, whilst I escape into the forest through the subterranean passage. One kiss, Sweet Pet ! and now be brave ! "

" They shall tear me limb from limb, " she replied with flashing eyes, " ere they force a passage ! Away ! dear love, away ! "

Without another word Sedley took down hastily a sword from the arm-rack and stole down the cellar-steps ; and Marie proceeded through a passage to the front door, which was strongly barred.

The unexpected visitors seemed to be growing impatient, for another loud knocking greeted her as she approached ; but she made no reply or sign of opening. Again however came the alarum, and this time with such increased violence, that after a further delay of a few minutes, she inquired,

" Who waits ? "

"It is I," replied Count Latour; "for God's sake open the door, as I have important business."

"But you are not alone?" was the cautious rejoinder.

"I am, but I have brought a spare horse with me: let me in and I will explain all."

"Wait a moment," said the little sentinel; and running upstairs, she opened a window which commanded the approaches to the cottage and examined into the state of affairs herself, for she evidently had no reliance on the count's word.

It was, however, as he had represented; so she opened the door, and the unwelcome visitor entered grumbling, for he had detected her manœuvre.

"Really, Marie," he began, "these suspicions are too bad towards one who is risking his own life to save your lover's. But this is no time for bickering: where is he? let me see him instantly."

Marie was out of sight before he had finished his sentence, and darting into the cellar she opened a small trap-door which formed the entrance to a subterranean connexion with the forest, and held the candle up as a signal.

In a few moments the Cavalier reappeared, out of breath and laughing.

"It was a false alarm then, my Pet?" he said.

"Not altogether, I fear, Ralph; for the count has arrived, leading a spare horse, and as he

avers, with important news : come, love, come quickly."

She led the way into the parlour, where they found Latour standing with his back to the fire, and both started at the strong agitation his features exhibited ; but before either could speak, he exclaimed in trembling accents,

"Good God ! Sedley, what fiend possessed you last night ?"

"I don't understand you, sir !" replied the Cavalier, much offended.

"Pshaw, man !" continued the other, angrily. "Let there be no concealment amongst us ! the least reparation you can make in this quarter is to make a clean breast of it."

"A clean breast of what ?" cried the Cavalier in the utmost astonishment. "Damn me, if I know what you are driving at !"

"It is really too bad," retorted the intruder, "to try and throw dust in the eyes of a friend who is striving at his own proper risk to succour you ! Will you deny, Sedley, that you were on Hounslow Heath last night between the hours of seven and eight, and—for a certain purpose ?"

"Certainly not ; I admit I was on the heath at that time, and as you say,—for a certain purpose."

"And what did you and your friends do when disappointed in that object ?"

"Why, disperse, of course and I returned straight home by the Moated Farm."

"Boldly asserted, by Saint Nicholas!" cried the count turning up his eyes in the most insulting manner, as if doubting his friend's word.

But the Cavalier was not exactly the man to be trifled with by anybody; and now, stung to the quick by the count's offensive demeanour, he started from his chair and advanced towards him as if hardly able to restrain himself from knocking him down, with the exclamation,

"What the devil do you mean to insinuate, you vile old intriguer?"

"That you and your friends, Ralph Sedley," replied the count, in a firm and steady voice, without moving a muscle of his imperturbable features and looking straight into the Cavalier's eyes, "committed a cruel, bloody, and vindictive murder!"

Sedley started back as if shot through the body, overwhelmed with horror and indignation.

"I!" he muttered almost unconsciously as it were to himself, "I! a gentleman and a Christian I hope, suspected even by my enemies of so foul a deed! Surely I must be dreaming?"

"By the soul of Machiavel!" and the Count Latour swore his favourite oath, "this is admirable acting; however I will not irritate you, Sedley, by further reflections, but give a simple

statement of facts. Know then, that this morning there was an ugly report on 'Change, that an attempt had been made to assassinate old Noll last night on Hounslow Heath, and public opinion at once pitched on you as one of the actors. Soon however Rumour changed her suit of sables, and it then ran, that the band which had lain in wait for Jolly Red Nose being disappointed in their aim and exasperated at the escape of their prey, and coming accidentally in this fierce humour on a party of travellers who turned out to be the regicide family of Thornton, assailed them desperately and slew the old knight and three of his escort."

"Great God," cried the Cavalier, the tears springing to his eyes, and quite oblivious from grief at the loss of his old friend of his own fearful position, "and is the good old man indeed gone?"

"He is sped there can be no doubt, for I saw the dead body myself; but hear me out. On learning these things I hurried toward Bishops-gate within, and there found the Coroner sitting and taking evidence on this dreadful affair. The widow and daughter had been brought into town and were present to give testimony in company with the commander of their escort, one Dick Harty, formerly a sergeant in the Parliamentary horse; and indeed it was through him the case

was brought to bear in the beginning against you, Ralph. So mark well what he affirmed. He, the sergeant, began by describing the skirmish briefly, dwelling much on the diabolical manner in which the knight was slain by a cowardly shot from the rear. He further stated that he was well acquainted with your person, inasmuch as he had lain in the wounded ward next to yours after Marston Moor ; and then swore positively, that you passed the escort on the heath muffled up in your cloak a little before the attack, and that he afterwards recognised you again in the *mêlée*. In due succession the ladies gave their evidence ; and after much to-do to make them speak out, especially as regarded the younger one, they both acknowledged that they too had recognised you in passing their carriage."

"I admit that circumstance," broke in Sedley, "for to my very great surprise I overtook their coach somewhere about the Moated Farm. But surely it is unreasonable to conclude that a man slew his dearest friends because he happened to pass them on a public thoroughfare about the time of their death?"

"I wish," continued the count very gravely, "that the evidence went no further. But oh ! Ralph Sedley," and he seemed quite affected, "what *will* you say when you learn, that *on the*

*very ground where the skirmish took place, a pistol was found on which your arms and initials are carved?"*

"That it is *utterly* impossible," replied the Cavalier boldly, "for I remember perfectly well taking my pistols out of the holsters on my return home and hanging them up in the next room in their usual place; and there they are now. Come and see."

He led the way into another room, candle in hand.

"See! there they are," he added, pointing to a pair of pistols hanging over the fireplace.

"Excuse me," replied the count suspiciously. "I do not wish to hurt your feelings, Sedley, but I know you had two pairs."

"Oh! the other pair hangs over the cupboard, but I am *perfectly certain* I carried *this* pair last night. However, in that corner you will find the others."

He advanced two or three steps and held up the light, and instantly started back in horror, poor Marie giving a suppressed scream at the same time; for *one pistol only hung over the cupboard*.

They turned pale and silent to Count Latour, just as his old venomous smile was fading away from his stolid features.

"Behold," he said in a tone of sardonic cant, pointing with his finger, "the hand-writing on the wall!"

The Cavalier stood speechless and aghast, but Marie with readier wit affirmed boldly,

"The weapon must have slipped from the holster as Ralph was galloping homewards, and by a coincidence at that very spot."

"But *he* asserted," rejoined the count, "that he carried the pair which *hangs over the mantel-piece.*"

"Pooh, sir," she retorted sternly, "you probably judge of others by yourself! As for me," she added, taking the stupefied Cavalier's hand and pressing it affectionately to her bosom, "if the evidence were a million times stronger than it is, it would weigh less than a feather against my Ralph's honour and humanity. And in fact what is so likely, as that, returning, poor fellow, as he did, cold and exhausted by a long night's ride, he should not recollect exactly which pair of pistols of the two hanging in the same room he had carried with him? No doubt he took this pair, and one sprang from the holster as he spurred over the heath. Nothing is more likely."

"*It may be* as you say, Marie; and also, that his comrades assailed the regicide travellers *after* Ralph had parted from them; but justice and pub-



lic opinion do not judge in that easy way, and will still inquire how the weapon that is missing from this place, found its way to the heath? Taking therefore into consideration the prejudice which already exists against Sedley on account of his fiery zeal for Royalty, and the clue the Government have of his warm intentions towards their favourite officer, just ask yourselves what would be the consequence of his arrest on this charge and under the above evidence? Why, certain conviction and ignominious death! And I tell you plainly, I myself saw warrants issued for his capture; so before sunrise the police will be on his track: unless therefore he can place the seas between him and his pursuers in twenty-four hours, he is a lost man!"

"But to fly," said the Cavalier reluctantly, "is to acknowledge myself guilty; and I would sooner perish than be dishonoured!"

"Oh! no, no," screamed Marie in dreadful agitation, for on perceiving her lover's real position and danger, her defiant tone changed suddenly to heart-rending anxiety and nervousness. "It is better to live to clear up a mystery which your death would bury for ever in oblivion. Take the count's advice, dear love, for my sake! for the sake of your poor Marie, who has but one stay on earth! Fly, dearest, and that instantly!"

"I have an excellent nag at the door," seconded

the count, "ready saddled and bridled, for I saw you would have to ride for your life. So load your pistols and on with your cloak. Every foot of the forest is known to me, and I will be your guide myself. We will make eastward all night; lie perdu during the day; continue our journey all to-morrow night, and with moderate luck, morning may find you on board a lugger bound for Rotterdam."

All was now bustle; and Marie flew from room to cupboard making such arrangements as her affection suggested for the Cavalier's comfort. The pistols were loaded; a flask of brandy and a few biscuits were stored in a small knapsack which was strapped to his saddle; his cloak was on; and in another moment, he held the fond and faithful Wanderer sobbing to his heart.

"Farewell! dearest—dearest Ralph!" she cried. "Farewell! beloved, adored husband! For by that name I may *now* call you. And oh! believe your Marie when she says, she is as convinced of your innocence in this matter as she is of your changeless affection for her own poor self!"

"Farewell! darling of my heart," he answered almost unmanned, and caressing her lips, eyes, and forehead over and over again. "Farewell! sweet wife, for such you are and ever deserved to be. Never! never! can I forget your true loving tenderness, and long-tried, generous devotion!"

“ Oh, God !” she murmured in agonising accents, “ bless and protect my own, my own dear Ralph !  
• And oh, Sweetheart, write, write the moment you are safe !”

The count, who was already mounted, again and again urged haste ; but loving hearts are not so easily torn asunder ; and though the Cavalier was now in his saddle, poor Marie still clung weeping to his stirrup.

He stooped over her once again and for the last time, with a tenderness which bedewed her up-raised face with mingled tears and kisses ; and so they parted ! she to watch and weep the live-long night by the now desolate hearth ; he to spur on through glade and thicket for dear life and dearer honour.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE TRAIL OF THE SERPENT.

'Tis the first watch of the night, brothers,  
And the strong wind rides the deep ;  
And the cold stars shining bright, brothers,  
Their mystic courses keep.  
Whilst our ship her path is cleaving  
The flashing waters through,  
Here's a health to the land we're leaving,  
And the land we're going to !

ANONYMOUS.

OUR fugitives rode hard and silently for three or four hours, the count leading the way through bridle-paths and forest tracks with a certainty that argued a very close acquaintance with the neighbourhood ; a circumstance which at other times would have attracted Sedley's attention, but which escaped his observation in the turmoil of mind produced by recent events.

In time they cleared the forest and took to the open country with unslackened speed ; and here too the mysterious guide seemed no way embarrassed, for he rattled on through bye-lanes and

solitary commons with unerring aim and dexterity. Occasionally they pulled up to breathe their nags and take a mouthful of brandy, and then on they went again; and so by break of day they found themselves in the midst of a low fenny country almost uninhabited and of most uninviting appearance. But the count expressed himself highly pleased with their night's work.

"By Saint Nicholas, Sedley, I have hit the exact point. Hard bye is a solitary farm where I am known, and we must rest and refresh there as best we may during the daylight, and ho! for the seaboard at nightfall."

He led the way to a large dilapidated farmhouse which looked as if it were untenanted, and knocked boldly at the door. Presently a lattice-blind was stealthily put aside, and the reconnoitre proving satisfactory, a woman's mellow voice was heard calling up some servitor who still slumbered on lazily.

"Sam, Sam!" she cried, "get up, you sleepy hound, and let in our friends; the count's at the door."

This harsh summons brought forth a stupid-looking red-headed clown, who took charge of their horses with many sententious observations; and the travellers after performing their ablutions, hurried to partake of a substantial breakfast which

had been prepared by their unseen hostess and which their long ride had made very acceptable ; after which the Cavalier retired to his bed-chamber to recruit his strength for the coming night's journey to the coast, and very soon lost all consciousness of terrestrial affairs. He slept the long and hearty sleep of youth when exhausted by healthy fatigue, and the shadows of the old farm were slanting across the eastern lawn before he started from his couch at the sound of a female voice, for he had been dreaming of his happy forest home.

"Surely," he exclaimed, "I heard Marie calling to me?"

He listened again and in some senses his opinion was confirmed. A woman's voice certainly was sounding beneath his window, not however the sweet tones of the pretty brunette of Epping Dale, but the deep contralto which first welcomed them at dawn and which fell somewhat familiarly on his ear. With a feeling of curiosity which he could hardly account for he stole to the window and peeped out, and to his surprise saw the count promenading on the half-ruined terrace beneath, which was now in the shade, with a singular-looking lady. She was a tall handsome woman with large black eyes, very well dressed, and a certain bold unblushing expression on her features which was easily understood ; and as Sedley watched her he could

not help thinking he had seen her before, though where he was rather desirous of forgetting.

The promenaders were conversing together like old acquaintances, although the count had declared he knew nothing of her excepting as the tenant of the farm and the widow of a horse-breeder with whom he had had dealings; and more than once the Cavalier fancied he heard his own name mentioned in allusion to some event which greatly excited the mirth of the lady. A movement however which he accidentally made attracted their attention, and after another formal turn they retired into the house, and sent up Sam to summon him to his dinner as it was nearly dusk. During this meal the merry landlady did not make her appearance; and in reply to a fencing inquiry from Sedley the count stated with a peculiarly saucy look, that her absence might perhaps be accounted for from the grief she still no doubt nourished for the dear departed.

It being quite evident that no information was to be got out of the astute foreigner which he was desirous of concealing, Ralph desisted from the design, and by the time their repast was finished and their horses ready at the door, the whole circumstance had faded from his volatile mind.

They rode harder all through that night than the preceding one, and here again his guide was

as much at home as ever, and was moreover recognised familiarly on nearing the coast towards morning by a rough-looking seaman who appeared to be on the "look-out." The fellow led the way down a steep path worn through the chalky soil by the winter floods, to a small thatched bothy which stood at the bottom of a ravine opening out into a dreary secluded cove, made seemingly for the especial advantage of smugglers.

Nothing certainly could have been better formed for purposes of concealment, though it must be admitted at the same time that there was an air of dishonesty about the neighbourhood which spoke for itself; for the cliffs on either hand rose to a great height, the hut was purposely half buried in shingle, seaweed, and projecting rocks, and the little rakish craft that rode saucily in the offing on a spring cable like a greyhound on a leash, seemed to dip her head into the swelling waves rather from conscious shame than any feeling of allegiance to an element she was evidently able to defy.

The seaman knocked at the door of the bothy, and it was opened by a smart-looking fellow, who started as he recognised the elder traveller. He was a small active middle-aged man, with irregular but intelligent features bronzed with exposure to the sea air, sharp grey eyes, and frank agreeable manners, and had been employed sorting out and



making up an immense number of letters and documents of every size and character, many of which were written in cypher.

"Van Roost," said the count coolly, pretending not to notice the stranger's surprise, "I have brought a passenger for the *Water Witch*—a sufferer in the good cause."

"Oh," said the Dutchman with a suspicious intonation; "I shall be happy to assist him across, of course; though I must say, Count Latour, I hardly expected the pleasure of your company here."

"As to that, Van," replied the imperturbable count, "it's all right again. This gentleman is going directly to his Majesty, God bless him, and you will receive instructions to resume our old correspondence immediately; therefore take care of this slip of paper, as it is my secret address."

"Very good, sir," was the dry answer; "my business is to obey orders and expedite all sorts of correspondence. And I think we had better embark at once, as I should not like to be caught by the sun in the offing." So saying, he placed his letters and documents in an oil-skin bag, and moved towards a boat that lay close in-shore.

Strange to say, our travellers had not exchanged a syllable on the dreadful circumstances which had caused their flight, since they began their rapid

journey seaward ; and Latour turning now to the Cavalier, who stood leaning in sorrowful meditation against the fireplace, approached the subject at last with considerable delicacy.

“Ralph Sedley,” he said, “we have seen some sharp work and spent many happy years together, and I should be sorry indeed to part with you in an unfriendly spirit. I say this, because I have felt for some time past that I have been losing ground in your regards ; but you should recollect that ‘rough times’ bring ‘rough acquaintances,’ and not judge me too harshly ; for misfortune is almost as hard a taskmaster as necessity—at all events, before we part, receive my earnest assurance that I hold you entirely guiltless in this matter. The evidence, to be sure, is against such a conclusion ; but I go on my thorough knowledge of your character, and there is my hand on it !”

The count had exercised for many years an astonishing influence over Sedley’s facile mind, but for some time past that interest had been waning, for the latter had gradually taken a violent disgust to his friend’s principles. But he was now so touched at his seemingly disinterested efforts to save him from an assured fate, and the frankness and friendliness with which he expressed his belief in his innocence, that all his old feelings revived, and tears sprang into the good-natured Cavalier’s

eyes, as he returned the pressure of his friend's hand.

"I have wronged you, count," he exclaimed, "in my thoughts lately ; but I will do so no more, old friend !"

"Enough, lad, enough !" said the other jollily ; "and keep up your spirits, for all will be well again, and that ere long. But now take note as to our correspondence. There is only one channel left, and that is through Van Roost, who, you must know, is a smuggler by profession, and the trusted agent of the Royalists by preferment. Send your letters therefore to him at Rotterdam, and he will forward them to me."

"And poor Marie !" exclaimed Sedley. "You will promise faithfully to give her my letters without the least delay, and forward hers to me ?"

"Depend on me, good friend ; and I will find comfortable lodgings for her in London, till we know what is best to be done ; for she must, of course, quit Epping without delay."

"This is kind of you, count, and I hope I may have it in my power to return these favours some day."

"Say not a word, Sedley, about such trifles. I have only done for you what I am sure you would have done under similar circumstances for me.

But in fact you can do me a service even now, and I will ask it of you freely. You know that I have been under a cloud latterly with your party, through certain reports circulated to my prejudice by my enemies, and I want you to assure his Majesty, or, if you cannot gain the Royal ear, Lord Wilmot, who knows me well, that I have been basely calumniated, and that I have ever held myself loyal to his service. It is true that in the confusion of the times, men are compelled to do things that bear a double construction; but you will feel, Ralph, how much appearances may mislead the judgment; and I repeat, I am an honest man to the King, and in proof of the same, say, that if I am again taken into his confidence, I will prove my value by secret services on this side of the water which no other man can render; for I hold a key that will unlock the mysteries of Whitehall."

"I will remember to urge this, count, at the first opportunity; and now adieu, old friend, and I pray you, say everything that is affectionate for me to poor Marie! Be kind to her above all things I beseech you, and my heart will ever go with my hand."

"Adieu!" cried the count, warmly pressing the Cavalier's hand, and almost overpowered apparently with his emotions. "I will do all in

my power to console her for your absence, rely on it. Adieu, my boy ; adieu !”

The fugitive stepped into the little boat, which was now heaving uneasily on the ground swell. A few strokes of the oar brought him alongside of the bark, whose sails had been filled by many an exile’s sighs, and in a minute more he was standing on her deck, and looking wistfully up at the white cliffs of old Albion ; and even then that distrust of the count, which had been gaining strength for a long time, and which had been lulled by his late friendliness, came suddenly over him again, and he felt an overwhelming desire to reland.

It was madness, however, to think of such a step. Life and honour depended on immediate escape ; the wind was fair, the sails were set, and even while he hesitated, the helm was put up, and the saucy *Water Witch* was dancing gaily over the wild waves of the German Ocean ; and so, with a heavy heart and a presentiment of evil which no reasoning could allay, the careless, kind-hearted, and vacillating Cavalier bade a sad farewell to his native land.

Very soon the little vessel was lost in the trough of the rolling ocean, and the mysterious guide, after resting a few hours in the smuggler’s bothy, commenced his return journey to Epping, in order to carry out his promises of protection to his

friend's hapless partner, arriving there on the third day.

He found poor Marie worn out with sorrow and anxiety, and harassed by the police, who not only had searched the premises over and over again, but had permanently occupied a portion of them.

None of the missing property had, however, been found in the house ; and as, whether Sedley was guilty of the murder of the old knight or not, there could be no pretence of implicating his mistress in a crime which had so decidedly a political bearing, it required only certain explanations which the count readily afforded, to enable him to remove her to London. The poor girl had received the news of her lover's escape with sobs and exclamations of boundless joy, and thanked the count for his generous interposition with more cordiality than he had been accustomed to latterly ; and when he came down in a coach to fetch her away, she received him with kindness and obeyed all his injunctions with alacrity and good-humour. But it cost her floods of tears ere she could tear herself away from the humble home where the few happy years of her wayward life had been spent.

Like a pilgrim, who gathers palm-branches at the shrine where he has fondly worshipped and which he may never see again, she loaded herself

with such evergreens and scented herbs as their little garden produced ; knelt in her pretty enthusiasm, and kissed and bedewed with many a tear the arm-chair on which the jolly Cavalier loved to recline ; and bore away stealthily his walking-staff and meerschaum ; and so, after much importunity and when every artifice of delayment had been exhausted, she was induced by the count to enter on their journey to the Metropolis ; but not before she had secretly instructed their driver to halt for a few moments at the bend of the Forest Lane, from which the last view of sweet Epping Dale could be obtained—to be treasured in as true and loving a heart as ever uncomplainingly bore the contumely of the cold misjudging world, for selfish, ungrateful, and undeserving man.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE OLD STORY O'ER AGAIN.

O beware, my lord, of jealousy ;  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on : that cuckold lives in bliss,  
Who certain of his fate, loves not his wronger :  
But O, what damned minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes, yet doubts ; suspects, yet strongly loves !  
SHAKESPEARE.

ON their arrival in town they drove to the neighbourhood of the Savoy, then the gayest part of London, and Marie was a good deal surprised at the superior style of the apartments which had been engaged for their use. They were luxuriously furnished and handsomer than anything she had been accustomed to since her sojourn in Paris ; but to her remarks on the subject the count carelessly replied, that he expected employment under the Government which not only permitted but necessitated a fashionable style of living : and in her mood the excuse satisfied her curiosity and scruples.



For the first few days indeed she could talk of nothing but her lover's escape, and the probabilities of his being able to clear up the horrid mystery which had enveloped him like a shroud ; urging the count constantly to render all the assistance in his power, and suggesting modes of doing so which seemed to her simple nature likely to lead to that result. Her protector fell readily into all these plans, protesting that he would leave no stone unturned to succour and exonerate his old friend ; by which means he rose much in her estimation.

After the first week, as might have been expected, she began to be very anxious for news from the exile, and harassed the count beyond measure on the subject ; and when the second week closed in disappointment, he had the greatest difficulty in soothing her agitation by the usual suggestions about the uncertainty of transit through an unfriendly country, the badness of the weather in the Channel, and such like excuses. But when the third and fourth weeks passed without bringing any communication from abroad, she fell into the utmost apprehension about his safety : so much so, that the count allowed her to draw from him, unwillingly as it were, the astounding fact, which he stated he had picked up from another correspondent, that the Cavalier had not only arrived in safety at his destination, but was in excellent

health and spirits and well placed at the King's Court.

Poor Marie hung her head at this unexpected blow, and made no mention of the subject for many days ; but her pale face and inflamed eyes too clearly told that the Cavalier's strange silence was never absent from her mind. The count, too, became graver in his deportment than was his wont, having all the bearing of a man who has received a severe repulse from an unexpected quarter ; very seldom alluding to the past at all, and when doing so, launching out into tirades about the professions of love and friendship which mankind unmeaningly indulge in, with a bitterness remarkable even in one of his cynical disposition, and quite at variance with his usual worldly demeanour. Still, to his *protégé* he was all kindness and respectful consideration.

At length the second month of silence and suspense passed slowly away, and it was evident that the secret struggle which was raging in Marie's heart was becoming too much for her delicate and excitable constitution.

Feverish symptoms developed themselves ; a certain wildness was observable in her beautiful eyes ; and she was often surprised weeping passionately, and sometimes talking incoherently to herself.

The time therefore had arrived for the explanation which had been long hanging on the count's tongue, and which he appeared to have delayed solely from sympathy for the poor girl's feelings. So one morning when he found her weeping alone in her boudoir, he pointedly exclaimed, as if unable longer to conceal his anger and disgust,

"Marie! I cannot keep back from you for another day certain circumstances which have come to my knowledge, and which will dry up for ever—nay, scorch like a burning wind, if you have any of the pride and spirit of your ancestry left in your veins, those tears which make us all so wretched. In a word—they are shed for a villain who is unworthy of your affection!"

There had been a time when Marie would have risen like a lioness to defend her lover's reputation against a world in arms: but the iron had entered her soul, and a terrible presentiment bowed her to the earth, and she only hung her head the lower and wept the more bitterly.

The count continued,

"See! here I hold the true explanation of Sedley's unmanly and cruel conduct!" (exhibiting some letters). "Allowing for his wild and ungovernable temperament, I trusted for a long time that his way of life, reprehensible as it certainly was, would run its course, and that his better feel-

ings returning, he would revive to a sense of honour and justice. But not so! He has plunged into a stream of profligacy which can only be matched by his doings in Paris, and which have even attracted the attention of a Court not prone to decorum. You must forget him, Marie! you must forget this ungrateful fellow!"

"Forget him!" she sobbed, burying her face in her hands. "Oh, oh, oh!"

"If that may not be," continued her adviser with more vehemence, "you will tear him from your heart if you be a true Italian woman; for he not only abandons you now, but he betrayed you before separation."

"Ha!" she exclaimed in a cold whisper, raising her face: it was pale as death: "*Have you proof of that?*"

"Behold it!" and again he pointed to the letters. "But to place you in full possession of all his infamy, know that even while he lived with you at Epping Dale in all that seeming fondness, he was endeavouring to make his peace with Miss Thornton. And I am not sure (mind, it is but a passing suspicion, for I will say no more than I can prove, though the dates have an ominous coincidence), I say I am not clear, that this attempt of his to renew his correspondence with his old mistress does not throw some light on the murder

of her father. However, be that as it may, he *did* write to her about that period, and here is the letter: for my suspicions being awakened by his constant and mysterious night ridings, I kept a watch on his correspondence, and intercepted this damning evidence through an agent."

"Give it to me!" she cried with intense vivacity.

He handed her a letter addressed by Ralph Sedley to Miss Thornton, in which he beseeched an interview in very ardent terms, protesting that although appearances were very much against him he was thoroughly ashamed of the foreign connexions into which he had been betrayed by youthful and unbridled passions, and hoped under her purer influence to merit favour by sincere reformation, &c."

"You know his handwriting?" observed the count.

It was most undeniably in the wild Cavalier's hand.

"Look at the date," he added.

It was dated about a fortnight before the catastrophe at Epping; and as Marie's dilated eyes fell upon that painful record of a period to which circumstances of domestic tenderness known only to herself gave envenomed force, she gave a piercing scream, and crying in all the abandonment of

southern passion, "Oh, viper, viper! I will tear you from my heart, if it bursts in the effort!" she rushed wildly from the room.

"Saint Nicholas be praised!" added the count cheerfully, twirling his long moustachios. "I find she is a Corsican after all!"

All that livelong night the unhappy girl's footsteps were heard crossing and recrossing her sleeping apartment without cessation, and it was known from the state of her bed that, in fact, she had not lain down at all. In the morning she made a plea of ill health for not appearing, but begged the count would let her have all the documents in his possession connected with their late conversation. They were sent to her, and consisted, independently of the note addressed to Miss Thornton, of several letters describing Sedley's way of life in Brussels in vivid colours. In the course of three or four days all these evidences of her lover's perfidy were returned with a short sentence written in a firm hand to the following effect: "Never more let this subject be alluded to—the past is forgotten;" and at the end of three weeks, she was found at the breakfast-table looking as if she had risen from the grave, but highly dressed, and with an air of hysterical cheerfulness about her quite as transparent as the most uncontrollable grief would have been.

Count Latour took good care to encourage a mood so favourable to his ulterior plans, and avoided systematically all reference to past events, securing from his protégé, however, a letter of repudiation to be forwarded to the unfortunate absentee; and in the course of a few more weeks he began to offer her the amusements of the capital with great liberality. Company too of an agreeable and refined class occasionally joined their family circle, and whatever may have been her real feelings, Marie, to his great joy, gradually joined in these pleasures with seeming gaiety, and even accepted the homage which her extraordinary beauty attracted with a sort of contemptuous satisfaction.

In this manner many months went by, during which a host of admirers were encouraged and derisively dismissed by the capricious beauty; and the count, who in a very earnest way was always pointing out to her the necessity of veiling her past career by a suitable marriage, was still sometimes harassed with doubts as to her complete emancipation from former weaknesses.

On such occasions he would redouble his arguments in almost an authoritative tone, but was generally silenced by some gay remark accompanied with a certain air of fierceness which gave warning of the fires that slumbered within, that

"the proper man had not yet appeared," or something to that effect.

In the course of time, however, a gentleman possessing the expected qualifications did place his hand and heart at the fair Corsican's feet, and was received with sufficient encouragement; yet, strange to say, he appeared to be to casual observers the one least likely to win an interest in a lady's heart of all those who had sought her favours.

The others were, generally speaking, young, handsome, and fashionable men, with plenty of assurance; he, on the other hand, was elderly and very bashful, and his short, sturdy person, common features, reddish hair, and light grey eyes, were not the recommendations that usually win the race in cupid's court; though it must be allowed that he was perfectly well bred, witty, and accomplished, and, moreover, affected that respectful tenderness which is known to carry such a sedative charm to bruised spirits. These advantages were increased by a show of constancy which her other admirers did not even pretend to; for they on rejection, *paraded* indifference while they *really manifested* indelicate and unmanly pique; while he, returned after more than one repulse to urge his modest claims with a devotion rarely found among men of the world.

Perseverance it is known has won as many hearts



as passion; and this gentleman who the count stated to be extremely wealthy, a leading member of the House of Commons, and the patron to whom he was indebted for his official employment, seemed destined to supply another instance in verification of that adage.

And yet when her guardian informed Marie in the most impressive manner once more, and for the last time (for delicacy demanded that her answer should now be final), that her most favoured admirer had formally made proposals for her hand, a struggle took place in her mind almost as terrible as the one which succeeded the intelligence of her lover's infidelity.

Insulted and abandoned, however, by the man she had idolized with all the purity, freshness, and unselfishness of First Love, hating herself and all the world, with blighted hopes and broken heart and not one true friend to counsel with in this trying emergency, the poor girl gave way at length to the insidious influence which had cast such a baneful shadow over her own and the Cavalier's existence; for the count urged on the alliance with every argument his fertile brain could invent; and it is difficult to say what might have been the result had not a singular accident turned the fiery current of her feelings into another channel.

There had been company one day about that

time at the count's, and Marie, after doing the honours of the table, had retired to rest, leaving as usual the gentlemen to enjoy their wine and pipes. The state of her mind, however, made sleep a coy visitor to her couch, and after a restless hour or two passed in endeavours to compose herself, she felt so feverish and excited that she rose again, and throwing a shawl over her shoulders, slipped quietly downstairs, intending to let herself out at the side door which led to the river terrace, for their residence abutted on the Thames.

All the household had retired for the night; she was therefore surprised to find as she flitted by, voices still proceeding from the dining-room, although the count's friends were in the habit of indulging pretty freely in the pleasures of the table; and surprise was succeeded by curiosity on hearing her own name used in a very familiar manner.

With a woman's instinct she listened.

"Well, count," said the favoured suitor, who had been so peculiarly remarkable for modesty and decorum, with a significant hiccup, "I admit candidly I doat on little Marie, for she is lovelier a damned sight than all the roses of Sharon and lilies of the valley put together, notwithstanding what the Croppies may say! But marriage is totally out of the question, my lad; so talk no more about

it, and I will make it up to you in hard coin. In short, name the *settlements* yourself."

"But I tell you, Henry Marten," replied the disinterested count, "that she wouldn't listen to *any other* arrangement. She is as squeamish as an old maid, and as proud as Lucifer!"

"Pooh! pooh!" growled the other; "don't talk to me about maids either old or young. Why, don't I know that she lived with that rascal Sedley for several years? Besides, as I said before, marriage is out of the question—it's an absolute impossibility."

"Why is it out of the question?" inquired his friend.

"Because," hiccupped the bashful and devoted Mr. Marten, "I have gone through that ridiculous ceremony with three devils already! and big—bigamy is getting—an awkward dodge now,—for 'Jolly Red Nose,'—curse him,—talks about making it a hanging matter."

"In that case," said the calm and imperturbable count, "all we can do is to get up a sham marriage to satisfy Marie's silly scruples. But mind, I am not to be taken in with the old trap about *settlements*! Nothing but the money down on the nail will do for me; though of course you will keep the girl handsomely while she is with you?"

"Of course I will," cried the lover eagerly, "for

ever and ever! My *dear* count, rely on *that*. Oh! the sweet little rogue! I never doated on a girl so in all my life before. However I must stipulate that the matter is carried out without any more delay; for I have learnt that the Royalist army is close to Worcester, and that that fellow Sedley holds a high command in it, and there is no knowing what the girl might do if she heard such infernal news, for she is still spooney I'm certain on that slippery young rascal!"

"Well then," observed the count, driving a hard bargain, "I must have 1200*l.* down; it's felony now, these sham marriages, so our hedge parsons are becoming conscientious and look to heavy tithes."

"No!" hesitated the lover, "1000*l.* ought to buy Venus herself—and Diana—Curse her! can't bear maids either young or old—into the bargain."

"Say 1100*l.*," insinuated the other, "or the affair is broken off! And cheap she is at that figure, though I say it who should not, for there is not such another hand and foot in all the city, to say nothing of her other charms which are obvious enough to men of experience."

"Agreed! agreed!" exclaimed the purchaser getting enthusiastic, "though it's more than I'd have given for the queen of Sheba herself, spite of

her pretty ankles. But when I think of little Marie's bright eyes and rosy lips, and—and— Damnation ! why shouldn't the affair come off to-morrow ?”

“To-morrow,” replied the count pompously, “I have to attend office, as no doubt there will be instructions from the northward about liming our royal blackbird, so I propose that this merry transaction be consummated the day after. And here is our programme : I will see that Marie sends in the morning a favourable reply to your proposal of marriage ; the next day we will breakfast here, and then take the water at the York Gate for Greenwich ; and there I will have a safe man to tie the knot of eternal love that—”

“Will make me the happiest of men !” shouted the excited betrothed, turning up his eyes with a most maudlin hiccup.

But Marie had heard enough, and with a beating heart she crept softly back to her room.

The base, cold-hearted adventurer, who had been the bane of her young life, and whose mysterious ascendancy over her confiding and affectionate nature seemed ever to revive with increased force after each exposure of his unworthiness, was at length completely unmasked ; and on her bended knees the poor girl thanked the good God for vouchsafing to her a discovery which saved her

from a fate more terrible than death itself. In her pious enthusiasm, for her disposition like those of her countrywomen generally was very susceptible to religious impressions, she exclaimed "Because for dear pity's sake I did not abandon my father on earth, my father in heaven has not abandoned me!"

Then came thoughts that set her brain on fire and sent the blood coursing through her heart like a mountain torrent.

"What if this unnatural villain had trumped up the story of Ralph's desertion? What if he had intercepted his letters to her and by some infernal device forged the one that was addressed to Miss Thornton? It might be so! Nay, it was! it was! It *must* be so! Oh! she must have been mad! mad with jealousy! to have doubted for an instant the true love of her kind, her merry, her generous-hearted, her own dear, dear Ralph! Oh! my brave, my beautiful darling, how unworthily have I treated you!"

The train was lit: that slender hope was enough for her guileless passionate nature. She darted to a small *escritoire* in which she stored her most precious *souvenirs*, and took out with a trembling hand a small miniature of the unfortunate Cavalier, and gazed at it awhile with weeping, straining eyes.

Then with an uncontrollable burst of fondness she covered it with kisses and pressed it over and over again to her bosom ; then she knelt to it and talked to it, as if it were conscious of her presence ; then she smiled, and laughed aloud, and again loaded it with fervid caresses ; and in short behaved in her pretty delirium of passion in so wild a manner as almost to indicate a sudden aberration of mind.

"But," she said presently to herself, "I must not give way to feelings that may weaken my nerves and prevent my acting with vigour and promptitude, for have I not now a duty, a dear and holy duty to perform ? Oh, sweet one ! Oh, my beloved husband !" she cried, apostrophising the little miniature, "for your sake, your poor Marie will steel her woman's fears and act with stern unbending resolution."

And so after some reflection she made up her mind to quit her present residence at early dawn, and proceed as rapidly as possible towards Worcestershire ; in which neighbourhood she had fortunately gathered from the conversation of her persecutors, (for she was kept herself in complete ignorance of passing events by her astute protector) the Royalists were making head, and Ralph Sedley in some post of importance.

The idea of a young and beautiful woman, and

she was well aware of her very great personal attractions, travelling alone through districts disturbed by civil war seemed indeed a proceeding fraught with danger; but it did not cow her gallant spirit, for affairs always seem facile to people of sanguine temperaments, and she was upheld by a principle which puts mettle into the hearts of the most timid.

"It was for *his* sake," she whispered to her own heart, "she ran these risks, and God would protect her as he had already manifestly done. Yes! she should reach her own dear Ralph in safety, and once in his arms, death alone should ever again part them!"

In this manner she endeavoured to keep up her spirits, hardly daring to own to herself that underneath these bold resolves lay trembling an inexpressible dread of the count: for she was satisfied now, that in his power, neither her life or honour were any longer safe.

She commenced her preparations for flight however with alacrity, making up as large a parcel of linen and necessaries as she could conveniently carry, and then dressed herself in her plainest clothes and put on her stoutest shoes. With greater care still she put up her small stock of ready money in a purse which Sedley had given her at the beginning of their acquaintance, and



with her darling miniature, hid it away in her bosom.

She was now ready for her perilous journey, but a painful duty still remained to be carried out, and painful it really must have been, for spite of the provocations she had received, she turned paler and sadder as she performed it. It was to write a brief note to the count, which after some hesitation and weeping she accomplished ; and it was to the following purport.

“That for the sake of that beloved being who was now a saint in heaven, she had overlooked many, many times, conduct and principles which she abhorred from the depth of her soul, and done her utmost to conceal the same from the world. But that she had at length discovered by overhearing his conversation with Mr. Marten, that he was a hundredfold a baser and wickeder man than she could have imagined any human creature could have become ; and that she therefore from that time forward utterly repudiated all connexion with him for ever !”

And lastly, she fell on her knees and prayed fervently to God for protection in her friendless condition ; adding with touching pathos, that if however it was decreed that she must perish in her undertaking, the Almighty would mercifully consider her life as an offering in behalf of her

dear and faithful husband, for whom she accordingly beseeched succour and every earthly blessing.

And so the generous hearted and unselfish Wanderer, stepping gently down the stairs, let herself out of a house where the utmost villany of which human nature is capable had been deliberately exerted to blast her honour and destroy her happiness.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ADVENTURES ON THE ROAD.

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Marie found herself in the dark and solitary streets, it wanted full two hours to daylight, and a feeling of mournful loneliness began to creep over her which those only can understand and appreciate, who have been abroad at that hour amongst the teeming habitations of a wealthy and luxurious metropolis. For there is no condition of society which is fuller of sorrowful reflection or less known to the busy world, than that which prevails during the suggestive hours which precede the dawn of jocund day.

That unwilling pause may indeed be better compared to the "death of each day's life" than to "sore labour's bath;" and is as fitting a com-

mentary on the abused and neglected Past, as it forms the warning index that points to the unknown, but *not unshaped* Future.

None are then abroad but the most vile and the most unfortunate : for at that hour alone in all the twenty and four, have Crime and Commerce suspended their operations ; it being just too late for the one, barely too early for the other.

The streets which seem so narrow in the crowded sunshine, expand in their gloomy desertion into grander and more menacing proportions : the monotonous rumble that deadened intelligence during the livelong day, has at last completely subsided : the flickering lamps are one by one dying out, like beacons whose caution is no longer heeded ; the stars are fading away, like benignant spirits whose period of solicitude has expired ; the last vile wassailer is staggering all unconscious to his miserable home ; the last houseless wretch seeks shelter beneath damp river arch or stately portico ; the last poor out-cast slinks broken-hearted back to her unknown hiding-place ; the last watchman creeps unsympathizing to his well-earned repose ; and all for a brief period is cold, silent, and desolate ! Even the voice of Sorrow is hushed in Despair—of Sickness in exhaustion ; and the Mighty City wearied by its Hopes and Fears, Vices, Labour and Luxury sleeps indeed at length !

Not however the happy sleep of Health and Innocence, but the fevered slumber of worn out vitality.

And not for long lasteth even that poor mocking rest ; for soon in the eastern sky is seen the pale glimmer of another Morrow, and with it from the wheels of the Pioneer of Commerce, the Market Cart, Phœbus-like comes again that dull, dissonant, disturbing rumble !

Now windows are here and there thrown open wide ; nightcapped heads look inquiringly forth ; a street door creaks lazily on its hinges ; and the sturdy footstep of some industrious Mechanic ringing cheerily on the pavement, breaks at length the spell that held exhausted Nature in thralldom.

The Giant awakes. The Hive is astir. The Deadly Struggle begins again. And another sun rises to gild with fallacious promise, another day of Sin, Sorrow, Toil and Disappointment !

Some such ideas as these streamed through the mind of the poor Wanderer as she wended her way stealthily towards Holborn, from which neighbourhood she knew the general conveyances departed ; taking care to attract as little attention as possible by keeping on the darkest side of the streets, and by tripping round a corner or hiding under a portal, when the uncertain footsteps of some benighted debauchee gave notice of approaching danger.

In this way she had advanced some distance

from the Savoy, when looking round, she found that she had accidentally approached the old Inn of Court in which Ralph Sedley had informed her he used formerly to lodge when leading a bachelor life amongst the young bloods of the law ; and an irresistible impulse induced her, dark as it was, to cross over and look once more on its sombre but to her interesting outlines. The large iron gates however were closed and forbade all ingress, which seemed to her excited imagination as she peered wistfully through them, emblematical of her own fate as shut out from her husband's heart ; and a few tears moistened the rusty old bars as this painful conceit passed through her mind.

But she was soon roused from dreams of the past to a keen sense of present danger by footsteps that echoed ominously through the solitary thoroughfare, and she had hardly time to ensconce herself behind some wagons in an open yard, when a middle-aged gentleman richly attired staggered by, his wavering gait clearly indicating the disgraceful condition he was in ; and a thrill of mingled loathing and apprehension kindled in Marie's mind as she recognised in the intruder her persecutor Mr. Marten.

But it was evident he was not in pursuit of his intended victim, for he passed her hiding-place deliberately ; and a little further on the main street

branching off into two minor ones, after some little hesitation, the debauchee took the turning to the right.

Much relieved at his departure, Marie was preparing to continue her journey, when suddenly another figure, tall and wrapt in a long riding cloak, appeared advancing rapidly like one in pursuit, from the same direction as her former enemy. He too hesitated at the point of intersection, and as the faint light of an expiring lamp fell on his swarthy countenance, the Wanderer started to see the features of a person who was very much in the confidence of the count, and about whom she had always entertained certain undefined suspicions, but who the latter gave out was the manager of a small farm of his beyond Epping Forest.

The tall stranger listened intently and looked baffled, when presently there came a low whistle from the lane up which the reveller had proceeded; this he answered, and muffling himself closer in his cloak, he disappeared with a quick step in the direction of the summons. Very soon there came down that street the sounds of a scuffle and cries for "help," succeeded by a heavy fall; and Marie, wild with fear and hardly knowing what to do, darted from her place of concealment and fled rapidly up the opening to the left. On flew her light steps till all signs of the turmoil had faded

away, and then secreting herself once more amongst some deserted outhouses, she took counsel on subjects of great importance to the success of her grand project. These were in the first place the smallness of her pecuniary means, and in the next, where she should dispose of herself until the conveyance by which she proposed to travel westward was ready to start, as there would be a risk of discovery if she loitered about a public hostelry.

With reference to the first difficulty she was literally at her wit's end, for the count, with all his pretence of liberality, could never be induced to part with ready money ; and partly from that habit and partly as she now thought from design, he had kept her almost entirely without an independent allowance : and so retired had been her life at Epping Dale, that she had literally not an acquaintance in England whom she could apply to, excepting those suspicious ones she had made during their residence in the Savoy.

As to the second, she felt no doubt of being able to surmount it, as in the vicinity of the "Blue Boar" there were many detached houses with large old-fashioned gardens ; some of which being unoccupied, it would be easy enough for her she thought, to secrete herself unseen in one of them till the hour of departure was near at hand.

About break of day accordingly she contrived to



reach that neighbourhood, and marked with delight the door of a long rambling garden on the latch, and peering in first to see if the coast was clear, she entered softly and fastened the door behind her.

The garden into which she had trespassed was in much better order than could have been expected from the appearance of the house to which it belonged, which was indeed both old-fashioned and dilapidated. The parterres were neatly kept and well stored with flowers; the terrace on the west side was smooth and neatly swept, and at the further end of it was a pretty bower almost buried in woodbines, looking towards Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Congratulating herself on her good fortune, Marie tripped into her harbour of refuge, and rested herself thankfully after the alarms of the night.

How long she had been there she could not say, for she soon fell to building castles in the air—a habit she had caught from Ralph Sedley—when she was roused from her reverie by a footstep. The sun had risen, and as she peeped cautiously out, she saw a gentleman bring a small deal table and chair from the house and place them at the further end of the terrace; he then produced an old inkstand, pens, and a manuscript, and sitting

down suddenly, fell at once to writing with astonishing rapidity. Occasionally he paused, looked wildly for a few moments at the clouds as they sailed over his head, and then hastily resumed his labours with immense earnestness. Presently he rose, and throwing down his pen with a peevish "Pshaw!" advanced meditatively along the terrace; and as the distance decreased between them, the Wanderer had a complete view of a countenance which the gentle-hearted can never look on without interest.

He was a man not above five-and-forty years old, but looked at least ten years older. His face, long, thin, and very pale, had a peculiar expression of nervous benevolence and anxiety about it, especially about the mouth, though his forehead was lofty and majestic, and his features classical in the extreme. His hair, soft and waving, was divided in the centre like a woman's, and descended gracefully on his shoulders, but it was already deeply tinged with silver; and contrary to the almost universal custom of the period, he wore neither beard or moustachios.

But his most attractive point were his eyes; large, blue, and gentle, and with that look of appealing hesitation in them which is often found in those who are partially blind.

His figure was rather above the middle height, extremely meagre, with a slight stoop in the

shoulders; and he was clothed in an old and threadbare dressing-gown, made up of some dark material.

With a slow and irresolute step and absent air, this unearthly-looking being advanced along the terrace directly to poor Marie's hiding-place, and the latter, foreseeing discovery to be inevitable, began to think of some explanation of her presence.

But no! he pauses; and gazes wistfully on the ground.

Was he a naturalist? and does he watch the ways of the industrious emmet as it crosses his path? Not so; for the little labourer has passed on his busy errand, and still the good man remains transfixed like one spell-bound.

Again with a slight motion of dissent the stranger resumes his promenade, and now he is so near to her, that Marie comprehends that he is in fact in a state of complete abstraction and unconscious of all things around him.

Could he be mad? was the nervous idea that next thrilled through the Wanderer's heart. There was small time to discuss that question, for he was by this time within half-a-dozen paces, and Marie was preparing to address him, when he suddenly halted and looked joyously up at the heavens. A beautiful smile lit up his pale sad countenance for

a moment, and hurrying back to his seat, he recommenced his labours in the utmost haste and agitation ; "giving to airy nothings a local habitation and a name."

He was an Author then after all ! was the pleasing elucidation of this unusual scene ; and our pretty Wanderer smiled to think, *perchance a Poet*. For there is a tie between Woman's loving nature and the Gentle Art, which neither time can wither or stern reality break wholly asunder !

"Perhaps," she whispered to herself, "he is writing of her he loves above all earthly things ! Nay, that may not be either, for, alas ! age has already seamed his gentle features. It must be of her he *did* love and is now no more. Yes ! methinks I can read the sorrowful episode in his melancholy eyes : but hush ! he comes again."

Once more the stranger advanced, and with the same pauses and peculiarities as before : but this time he approached so close to her hiding-place that Marie, thinking exposure to be inevitable, took heart of grace, and stepping modestly forth she curtsied to the ground, and in a humble tone said,

"Pardon my intrusion, sir ! Necessity compelled me to trespass !"

"Ha !" exclaimed the stranger, starting back in wild affright ; "Almighty God ! do I dream ? 'I

but pondered on the dead, and lo! she standeth before me in beauteous life!"

This extraordinary reply greatly alarmed our Wanderer, and the suspicion that he was a maniac returned with increased force; and indeed it was difficult to come to any other conclusion, for strange as were his words, his manners became stranger still.

After the exclamation we have noted above, he had staggered back some few paces like one who has seen an apparition; and he now stood gazing on Marie with a look of utter bewilderment.

But there was such an expression of sorrow and mildness in his eyes, and he seemed so completely prostrated by the idea which had possessed his mind—for he leant for support against the balustrade—that her confidence revived, and she observed in a kindly tone,

"I am led to think, sir, that you mistake me for some other person?"

"Good God! the very voice too!" was the incomprehensible answer. "And yet," he continued more soberly, "marvellous though it be, I can see that it is but a coincidence. Yes, madam! it is as you say: an extraordinary resemblance, such an one indeed as no words can do justice to; the suddenness of the thing, with the weak state of my health and nerves, and the strange fact—

for fact it really is—that at that very moment I was thinking of her who is an angel in heaven, but whom you so perfectly resemble, deceived me into the belief that a supernatural occurrence had taken place. I demand pardon, madam, for the agitation I have unwittingly caused you, and shall think myself very fortunate if I can make up for my want of tact by some honourable service.”

“Nay, sir,” said Marie, much relieved at the stranger’s gentle courtesy, “I ask you mercy, for it is I that am to blame for intruding on your privacy. But misfortune, sir, urged me to a step which I felt to be indelicate. I will tell you the whole truth : I am about to leave London by the light waggon which starts from the ‘Blue Boar’ at nine o’clock, and for private reasons I did not wish to be seen waiting about in the neighbourhood ; and seeing your garden door on the latch, I could not resist the temptation of taking refuge here for a short time.”

“Pray say no more about such a trifle, madam ; and as you have still an hour to spare, and the ‘Blue Boar’ is not more than five minutes’ walk from this, I trust you will continue your repose.”

It was evident that his curiosity was excited to the utmost, and that he was trying to gain time ; but so deferential were his manners and bearing,

that our Wanderer thought it would be ridiculous to decline such civility from over prudery.

"Thank you much, sir," she therefore replied, "and if I felt sure that I did not interrupt—"

"Oh! no, no, no," he exclaimed, laughing; "beauty can never interrupt *our* handicraft. And now that you are so good as to accede to my invitation, perhaps you will join us in our morning repast? Nay, no denials—no denials;" and he hurried towards the house, calling aloud, "Phœbe, Phoebe Mayflower! thou art late with breakfast."

At this summons a large, rosy, middle-aged woman, who certainly resembled no flower that is known unless it were the peony, bustled out of the house carrying a tray of light viands, and placed it with a mighty show of officiousness on the little table on the terrace.

It was easy to see that she was a personage of despotic mood and immense importance, though there was a good-humoured twinkle in her eye, that indicated in the words of the old proverb, "that her bark was worse than her bite." The breakfast being laid out, Phœbe, during her demonstrations of attention to her master, like a good general reconnoitred the enemy who had made such a sudden inroad on her domains; and sad to say, poor Marie's pretty face did not make its usual favourable impression; for as the house-

keeper returned towards the kitchen, she muttered loud enough to be heard, "As sure as my name is Phoebe Mayflower, he is agoing to put his foot into it again!"

So pleasing and polite, however, were the manners of her host, that Marie overcame all reserve, and partook cheerfully of the little repast he had kindly offered, conversing with him meanwhile on ordinary subjects; and with a woman's penetration she soon detected that all his efforts and thoughts were employed to obtain her confidence for some ultimate purpose, which timidity prevented his approaching directly.

"I travelled much in my youth, madam," said he, fixing his eyes earnestly on hers, "and I am sure, notwithstanding the perfect manner in which you speak our language, that England cannot boast of you as a daughter."

"Your surmise is true, sir," replied the Wanderer, "for I was born in Italy."

"Born in Italy!" exclaimed the incomprehensible host, changing colour. "How strange!—how wondrous strange!"

Again Marie was puzzled. What was there strange in her being a native of the south of Europe? Could it be, after all, that this gentle being was suffering from a certain degree of aberration!



At all events the situation was getting too painful to be borne any longer, and she determined, if it were only in return for his generous hospitality, to give him as full an explanation as her unfortunate position permitted her to do, and so relieve his mind from an incubus which seemed to threaten its equilibrium.

"I can see, sir," she began, "that you are still dubious about my identity. It would be cruel and ungrateful in me, therefore, to leave you in uncertainty, although my affairs are just now so embarrassed that I cannot speak of them with the candour I should otherwise desire. This much however know, that my name is Marie, and that I am the only child of Beatrice and Marco Pestamorti."

"I knew it! I knew it! My heart as well as my eyes told me so at the first glance!" cried the stranger with a passionate burst of sorrow. "Oh, pretty flowret," he continued, taking her hand tenderly, "that I pledged myself to guard, how—how have I redeemed my gage?"

"Then you *do* know me, sir?" cried Marie, now surprised in her turn beyond measure.

"Yes, yes! Oh! Marie, you were but an infant, when I swore to her whom you so perfectly resemble, to cherish you to the utmost of my power. But, dear girl, I will endeavour as well as my agi-

tation permits, to put you at once in possession of the salient points of that romantic episode in my barren career, so that you may know you are with one whose affection is that of a parent."

He then gave with the utmost earnestness a brief account of his early connexion with her family; his esteem and regard for her mother; and with more reserve his suspicions of her father, "which led indeed," he added, "to his promise of watching over her interests."

"And now, dearest Marie—for by that name I *may* call one I look on as a daughter—tell me candidly in what way I can best assist your plans? Further confidence than what may be agreeable to yourself I do not ask or expect; it will come, I am sure, in good time. Meanwhile only one inquiry, and then say how your true friend can be useful to you without intrusion or impertinence. Does your father still live, my child?"

"He does, sir," replied Marie in a good deal of confusion: "but—but—I will not conceal from *you* that we are not on good terms; though it—it—is difficult for me at present to explain the reasons of our disunion."

Her host marked her agitation, and seemed particularly anxious for information, but in deference to her feelings refrained with good breeding from prosecuting his inquiries on so delicate a subject;

while Marie reflected that it was unnecessary to put her kind guardian in possession of all the awful circumstances of her situation, the very thought of which made her blush with shame, while it would be ungenerous to keep him entirely in ignorance on topics which so deeply interested him. She therefore adopted a middle course, and informed him, that she was the wife of an officer of rank in the royal army, and that she was now on her way to join him in the neighbourhood of Worcester ; but that she had both political and personal motives for withholding his name and maintaining strict secrecy in her movements, and so craved indulgence on those points.

“ You have a difficult task before you, sweet one, for the discipline of our armies is extremely severe, and every effort will be made by the garrison of Gloucester to prevent any communication with the Royalists from that quarter. The campaign, too, that is about to ensue is likely to be a most desperate one, for the exasperation of both parties is at its height. Cannot your journey be postponed for a few days, as a week will probably decide this controversy ; and a father’s home and affection are you know at your command.”

“ Oh ! no, no, no ! ” cried Marie, awaking to her dismal and desperate condition ; “ not a day ! not an hour ! Go I must, and that speedily.”

"At all events," said her kindly-disposed host, brightening up a little, "I can assist your project to a certain extent, for the officer who commands at Gloucester is a friend of mine, and a note to him would always secure you his protection from all personal dangers, though I am sure he would not further your plans of crossing through his lines; therefore on that point you must be wary and exercise your own judgment."

So he wrote a hasty note to the officer in question, commending the bearer to his protection as a lady in whom he took a deep interest, and presented it to his young *protégé*; and then taking both her hands between his own, he continued with the utmost delicacy of manner,

"And now say, dearest child, is there anything else I can do for you; for alas! time is stealing on apace. I am not rich, but—but—"

"Oh, sir!" cried the Wanderer, "you have touched the very key-note of my anxieties, for to say truth—"

"No more, child! not a word more! it is heartily at your service."

So saying the poor Author thrust his hand gallantly into his pocket, but disappointment covered his face with schoolboy blushes; for what the good man sought, was not to be found there.

Marie, with a woman's tact, instantly seeing his

dilemma, said something courteous about its not being a matter of much consequence ; to which he replied,

“Nay, nay, I will be with you in a few minutes,” and darted towards the house calling aloud, “Phœbe ! Phœbe Mayflower !”

That important personage accordingly developed her comfortable proportions at the door, but with slow unheeding step and lowering brow ; for her prophetic soul had already divined the situation of affairs.

“Phœbe,” began the *master*, in a coaxing voice, “just step over to Master Russel, and say that I shall feel particularly obliged if he will lend me five gold Jacobuses, and he shall have them again with interest and thanks at Christmas.”

“Now, there you bees again, Master, with them idle husseys !” was the fierce rejoinder of the indignant housekeeper ; “we shall be eaten out of house and home if this sort of work goes on much longer.”

“But, Phœbe,” said her Master very softly, for he feared Phœbe’s animadversions might be overheard by his little *protégé*, whose feelings he would not have hurt for a king’s ransom ; “this, I tell you, is a very peculiar and urgent case : a poor gentlewoman in great distress and much persecuted ; so get you gone quickly.”

"Why, you said the very same words, as sure as my name is Phœbe Mayflower, about that ere blessed nun who had escaped from foreign parts, as *you would* have it, and who turned out, as *I* knowed she was from the first, no better than she should be! and who made a clean pair of heels of it one fine morning with every silver spoon in the house."

"Never mind, good Phœbe," was the laughing reply, "I fully admit your penetration in that luckless affair: but haste you now, or I must go myself."

And so at length the good-natured Phœbe, having eased her virtue by the display of the usual amount of decorous, and, generally speaking, unjust suspicion, demanded under the circumstances by society, and proved her sincere regard for her indulgent master by worrying and opposing him at a most critical moment, went forth with a clear conscience on her financial errand to St. Bride's Churchyard, where Master Russell carried on the humble business of a tailor, professing modestly to supply all customers with good cloth and fair measurement; and returned triumphantly in good time with the needful, and a very civil message from the worthy old tradesman.

The delighted host placed the little godsend in

the hands of his adopted child with many kind words, adding however,

“And now I will conduct you to your conveyance, for, alas! the hour of separation has come once again.” And offering his arm to Marie with a gallant air, in a few minutes more they reached the “Old Blue Boar” hostelry without further adventure: and then placing her carefully in the vast conveyance which was about to start, and which proposed, God willing, to reach the fair city of Gloucester in three days, he embraced her with all the tenderness of a parent; and whispering “Write soon, dearest child, for I shall think ever of you; and do not forget my address, ‘Master John Milton, Holborn Hill,’” he took a sorrowful adieu.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE SPY.

I look down towards his feet,—but that's a fable ;  
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE journey to Gloucester was made with more safety and comfort than our Wanderer expected, for the conveyance itself was under the supervision of the Government, and her fellow-travellers were respectable, God-fearing men, who were so absorbed in wrangling about the true interpretation of certain meaningless passages in the Old Testament, that they hadn't time to mark the great personal attractions of their companion ; and on reaching her destination they took leave of her with an indifference which would scarcely have satisfied a coquette, recommending her however to a quiet hostel where she was received with much civility. Her first care of course was to make inquiries about the position of the royal army and the possibility of reaching its lines.



To the first part of the inquiry every information was readily given, and she learned with almost hysterical delight that the town of Upton, only some twenty miles distant, was held for the King by a strong detachment commanded by the brave Colonel Sedley. But when she pushed her inquiries a step further and hinted that she had some pressing necessity to proceed in that direction, she was warned by some in a friendly and by others in an ominous tone, that such a desire was likely to be misconstrued and lead to such disagreeable consequences that one and all declined being mixed up in the scheme.

Here then was an obstacle that threatened to wreck all her hopes actually in sight of port. But her loving spirit had been so roused at the thought of meeting once more her adored Cavalier that she resolved without hesitation to accomplish her purpose alone and on foot in spite of every danger, or perish in the attempt. Full of this project, she contrived to enlist the sympathies of a good-hearted servant girl who did the rougher work of the hostel, and who procured for her the ordinary dress of the peasant women of the Severn valley in exchange for her own more costly one. After this lucky arrangement, our Wanderer retired early to rest to renovate her strength for the coming adventure, and the next morning she was stirring

with the lark, and after settling her little score and taking a kind leave of her humble friend, she set out cheerily on her daring expedition.

One thing consoled her very much ; it was the certainty of escaping all personal insult as long as she was in the vicinity of the Parliamentary troops ; for their habits were as formal as their discipline was severe ; and she trusted to Sedley's well-known name being her safeguard as she approached the Royalists.

With these hopes and fears coursing through her mind, she threaded her way through the narrow streets of Gloucester, passed safely through the fortifications, and took to the open country, resolving to follow the course of the river to Upton.

She had gone in this manner four or five miles without molestation, when she was overtaken by an old peasant man who saluted her civilly in the broad accent of the district. He was attired in the loose smock-frock, coarse leather gaiters and shoes, and broad-brimmed straw hat, of a farm labourer ; and there was nothing unusual in his appearance beyond that he was hump-backed and had a large black patch over one eye, having, as he afterwards stated, lost that organ at the first siege of Gloucester ; though, with the vanity of deformed persons, he cultivated beard and mous-

tachios altogether out of proportion to his diminutive figure.

Marie returned his salutation with an easy air, for she knew that the best mode of parrying intrusion was to seem indifferent to it, and the man's age and humble position were in themselves guarantees of good behaviour.

"Beest thou," he asked, presently, "beest thou one of the right sort?"

"What do you mean by the right sort?" replied Marie prudently.

"Why," said he, lowering his voice, "I manes the King's side to be soore! and not them sour Croppies as denies a poor man his drop of ale and bit of pleasure o' Sundays, while they rollicks all the blessed week themselves in clover."

"I am certainly of his Majesty's party; that is, my friends are. Can you tell me how far we are from Upton?"

"Upton! you maun go there," said the old peasant, shaking his head, "if you really bees o' the right sort!"

"No?" cried Marie in great alarm. "Why, I thought that post was held for the King by Colonel Sedley?"

"Ay, ay, and so it was; but that deil's baby. Old Noll, paid 'em an unexpected visit a few

mornings ago, and they were obleeged to make a bolt of it."

"And—and—some—some of our brave fellows were—were injured?"

"A power on 'em and no mistake, for the Curnel warn't the man to hollow out afore he is hoort."

"Ah!" cried our poor Wanderer, restraining a scream with the utmost difficulty. "Was he—was *he* then—wounded?"

"Noa, noa, *he* warn't, but many as good a man was; so Bob tells I."

"Oh! God be praised for that! God be praised for that!" she cried, the tears rushing to her eyes. "Then you have friends serving under him?"

"To be soore I has, and that's wot brings I into this ere cursed neighbourhood; for my boy Bob is the Curnel's trumpeter; and though I says it as shouldn't, a smarter lad never took to fighting for King and Country, pot and pie-crust."

"Is he then indeed so warlike?" inquired Marie, smiling at the old peasant's enthusiasm about his son.

"Lor' love ye! it's bred in his very bones, for I was just such another at his age. Why, afore our Bob took to fighting on account of the King, he was always at it on his own! Ay, ay, and a

precious troublesome life we all led in our village. Cats and all ! cats and all !”

Marie in spite of her own anxieties began to be pleased with her old companion, who proved to be quite a character, with a good deal of humour in his composition ; and she thought it would be fortunate, if she could, without entering into explanations of a delicate nature, take advantage of the accident which had thrown them together, and seek out Sedley’s head-quarters under his guidance and protection. At the same time, so suspicious had she become of all the world, that she determined before courting his services to try him silyly with some cross questions about affairs in general.

“ But I cannot make out, friend,” she observed, “ how *you* should have heard of this action at Upton, when the garrison at Gloucester knew nothing about it ?”

“ Lor’ bless you ! they knowed it well enough. But them Croppies holds council tighter than our side, and they thinks I daresays by keeping quiet to gather up the good folks as is coming up to his Majesty’s help from Monmouth and the western parts ; but I’ll see if I can’t save ’em that trouble when I reaches Tewkesbury.”

“ And how can an old man like you do so good a service ?”

“ By sending out a runner to be soore ; and the

Curnel will see I aint a loser by the job I'se warrant."

This honest zeal of the old peasant's for a cause endeared to her as that of her own dear Cavalier, completely removed all our Wanderer's scruples, and without more ado she told him that she was endeavouring to reach Colonel Sedley's quarters, as in fact, she was a relation of his and the bearer of important despatches; and proposed, as he was travelling in the same direction that they should keep together for mutual countenance. The old man was not in the least surprised at her confession, for so it might be called, as ladies of the highest rank were employed at that eventful period as messengers and even as spies, and readily agreed to her proposition; suggesting that on reaching Tewkesbury they should halt for refreshment, and at the same time endeavour to hire some description of light cart, as there would be still a dozen miles to get over.

"Ay, ay," he added good-humouredly, "I knowed from thy talk thou wert summut highish, marm; but I warn't agoing to take on about that; it would have been other guess work had I been my son Bob! Ay, ay, Bob's a wild colt among the lasses; but a better lad and a braver don't live, though I says it as shouldn't."

And so these new acquaintances travelled on

together cheerfully, the one relieving the monotony of the road by quaint observations on men and manners, and the other congratulating herself after her late experiences in having found in her great need an humble but honest friend.

They reached Tewkesbury in the afternoon, and partook of some refreshment at a small inn on the outskirts of the town ; after which the old peasant went in search of a runner for the errand he had spoken about, and to make arrangements for prosecuting the remainder of their journey in a carriage of some description, advising Marie, who was a good deal exhausted, to lie down meanwhile and recruit her strength.

He came back in an hour in good spirits, having accomplished both purposes, boasting much of his prudence and dexterity, and stated that he had contrived to pick up a good deal of news about the position of the opposing armies which no doubt would be useful to them, all particulars of which he promised to communicate to her by and by.

In a short time a light-covered van, drawn by a sorry horse, was brought to the door, and our travellers resumed their journey midst a good deal of rough raillery between the driver and mine host about the capabilities of their Rosinante, the latter pretending to be in great trouble about the delicate state of the poor animal's health, as he

exhibited painful symptoms of a consumptive character; while the former maintained stoutly that appearances were often deceptive, that he came of a well-known stock, and that in fact a better nag never stepped over the Wolds of Gloucestershire.

"Ay, ay," observed our old friend sententially; "let 'em rail—let 'em rail! It aint all gold that glitters, and he'll do our work I'se warrant; and for the matter o' that, the shabbier he looks the less chance there is of our parting company with him, for the troopers on both sides have pressed every sound beast they could lay hands on."

"I am sure," said Marie, gratefully, her heart expanding with joy as she drew nearer and nearer to her beloved—"I am sure you have managed our affairs admirably, and the colonel will thank and reward you for it, my kind friend. But you said that you had learnt somewhat of the difficulties of our position; I trust they are not increasing!"

"Ay, ay," was the reply; "the smoother the road the better young folks likes it. But there is nothing, marm, out of the common in the way of troubles, as far as I can make it out. You sees the taking of Upton by them Croppies makes it dangerous to keep along the river any further;



so we intends to bear away to the left towards Malvern."

"And do you think we shall fall in with Colonel Sedley's force in that neighbourhood?"

"I shall be very much surprised if we doant ; that's all I knows."

These assurances greatly satisfied our Wanderer, and with a dancing heart she began once more to chalk out a thousand extravagant plans of future happiness ; for never for one instant did she doubt a tender reception from her lover.

Having once adopted the idea of his perfect constancy (explaining to herself his long silence by the treachery of the count), she threw all further doubts to the winds, and indulged in the fondest anticipations of welcome and happiness. Indeed she rather blamed herself for having *dared* to doubt his true, honourable, and gentle character for an instant.

"To think," she murmured in her loving enthusiasm—"to think that I, a mere outcast, who am so entirely unworthy in mind, body, and worldly position, of his noble and generous passion, should *actually have dared to suspect* a nature that is incapable of deception ? Oh, sweet, darling Ralph ! by a long life's unceasing devotion I will endeavour to atone for such cruel, such unjust misgivings ! Yes ! we will leave these wretched scenes of strife

and bloodshed, and in some pretty bower of mine own southern land we will live once more for each other alone !”

After travelling in this way for some hours, Marie wrapt in rosy dreams and her conductor in more refreshing ones to judge by his nodding and heavy breathing, they began to fall in with patrols of the royal cavalry who challenged them with the usual formalities ; but the exhibition of a Pass which the old peasant produced was admitted with civility, and they were allowed to proceed without further inquiry or molestation.

It was quite dark before they reached the village of Barnard's Green, where the old peasant got out again to reconnoitre, and as it proved, for the last time, soon returning with the agreeable intelligence, that Colonel Sedley's head-quarters were established at Maddersfield Court only two miles off.

Our poor Wanderer's agitation during those two miles almost mastered her reason and sense of propriety, and it was well for her that the darkness prevented her delirium of rapture from being observed, so uncontrollable had it become by long suspense and irritating restraint.

She blushed and smiled and sighed and wept in varying succession, murmuring to herself the while anticipations of joy such as the imaginations of lovers only can create. Every minute she strained

her eyes to see if the house was in sight ; every instant she inquired of the driver how much further it was ; and the last brief delay seemed not only greater than the entire time occupied by the journey from Gloucester, but absolutely endless and beyond computation.

Soon however lights began to appear through large groves and plantations, and at a turn of the road they came suddenly on a long avenue of ancient elms, beyond which in a hollow space, lay an irregular low-roofed gable-ended mansion, built of dark red brick, surrounded with a moat, and almost covered with ivy.

All round the avenue the horses of a strong body of light cavalry were picketted, and a few tents were pitched here and there amongst the trees, and in front of the gateway a battery of field artillery was drawn up and guarded by a sentinel.

An officer now came forward and demanded their business ; and the old peasant descending from their van entered into explanations which again proved sufficient, for the gates were thrown open and they were requested to proceed according to their pleasure.

They continued on their way accordingly up the long and stately avenue, and when they had

reached the large lawn in front of the mansion, the old peasant informed the Wanderer that this was Maddersfield Court, and that if she would wait a few minutes he would give intimation of her arrival to the housekeeper in order to prevent confusion or surprise ; so saying, he crossed the moat by the drawbridge and rang boldly at the little narrow portal for admission.

The summons was answered by an old lady of comfortable appearance, with whom he exchanged certain civilities in a low voice, and then calling on Marie to descend and advance, he observed,

"This, marm, is the housekeeper, and she says that Curnel Sedley is at present out, but that he will be home to dinner."

"And I think you had better step in, madam," added the housekeeper, "and refresh yourself after your long travels, for I am sure the Colonel will be in in less than an hour."

"Thank you, thank you," cried Marie in the utmost confusion and with her little heart palpitating like a captive bird's, "I will wait—that is to say, if you *can* let me have an apartment, till—till—the Colonel arrives—"

"Oh yes, madam ; I can show you a nice room where there is every convenience."

"Oh thanks, thanks ; and you, my *good, good*

old friend, I must not forget to thank you also for all your kindness ; but to-morrow he, *he* will thank and reward you too for *my* sake."

"Ay, ay," quoth her guide in his quaint way; "the one ain't o' much use without the other. But gude night and a merry meeting to ye, marm. I'll just go and see if I can't roust out our Bob."

So saying he took his leave, and the Wanderer was conducted by the housekeeper to her room with a good deal of ceremony.

Her companion however on this bustling day appeared to have still other duties to perform, for hastening down to the lodge-gate he mounted a carriage which had been procured during his absence, and drove rapidly towards Worcester.

On his way through Powyck he had a short interview with Generals Montgomery and Keith who commanded at that important Post; and on reaching Worcester he proceeded direct to the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief the old Earl of Leslie, and had there another and a longer conference.

Then with an energy surprising in a person of his age and deformed appearance, he hurried off on foot to the Sidbury gate of the city, and was endeavouring to get through unobserved, when the officer in command refused him permission to pass without an express order from the commander-in-chief, on the grounds that the Guards were set for

the night and the enemy's Patrols close up to the walls.

The Passport however which had done so much service during the day, again acted like a talisman. The drawbridge was lowered, the officer wished him a "God speed," and the old peasant disappeared in the direction of the enemy's camp.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE DEATH OF THE FAITHFUL.

Thy God hath said 'tis good for thee  
To walk by faith and not by sight :  
Take it on trust a little while,  
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right  
In the bright sunshine of his smile.

KEBLE.

WE must now take up the thread of military affairs, as it will lead us directly to the *denouement*, which the reader will see is fast approaching.

After having performed his duty according to his conscience as one of the Judges of the late King, Colonel Thornton accompanied his Great Chief into Ireland, and served with distinction in the brilliant and vigorous campaign which reduced that turbulent kingdom into complete subjection ; returning with him on his appointment to the chief command in Scotland, and sharing under his victorious leading the glories and dangers of the famous field of Dunbar.

This action however, did not terminate the war

in Scotland ; for though it placed the Lowlands in the power of the English, the Highlands remained staunch in their allegiance to the Stuart family ; and Charles Prince of Wales, who had landed during the preceding summer in Scotland and been crowned at Scone under the style of Charles II., was still at the head of a very large following in comparative safety at Aberdeen.

The lateness of the season determined the Parliamentary Commander to postpone the dispersal of the Highlanders till the ensuing spring ; and the Royalists made use of the delay to organize an army formidable at once by its numbers, material, and discipline.

With this force the young King was drawn by the talented manœuvring of Cromwell to abandon his strong position in the mountains and penetrate into England, where his destruction was in reality much surer and easier than it would have been among his native fastnesses ; though to the uninitiated in warfare, it seemed as if the King had achieved that advantage against the wishes of his veteran opponent.

He advanced accordingly in great haste through the Western Lowlands and Lancashire towards London, becoming enveloped more and more at every step by the Parliamentary columns ; which making a show of resistance at detached points,



such as Warrington Bridge and other places, fell back on their Supports by preconcert after such demonstrations, to swell the ominous *cortége* which hung like a thunder cloud on the flanks and rear of the Royal Expedition.

Harassed by these manœuvres, disappointed at the lukewarmness of his partisans in the northern counties, and exhausted by the length and rapidity of his march, Charles by the advice of all his principal officers abandoned midway all further idea of reaching the Metropolis; and threw himself into Worcester, a city as remarkable for its fidelity to the royal cause, as for its capabilities of military defence.

The city of Worcester was at that time strongly fortified, and as it stood on the left bank of the Severn with an excellent stone bridge connecting it with the suburb of St. John on the right, it commanded all the valley as far as Gloucester, and enabled its occupiers to draw their supplies from either side; and at the same time to open communications with Wales, in which Principality the loyal Britons were mustering with all the zeal and ardour of their race.

To make this position still more secure, the Royalists with good judgment, garrisoned the little town of Upton, which lay on the right bank of the stream some ten miles lower down, with the inten-

tion of cutting off all connexion with the left by breaking down the old bridge at that place. This step was of the utmost importance to the security of their general line of operations, as there was no other bridge across the Severn nearer than Gloucester; and it was also a point so easily reinforced from Worcester, that an advance from Gloucester on the right bank excepting in very great force indeed, became altogether hopeless.

The King, much satisfied with his acquisition, issued a Manifesto to the English nation in which he promised them all manner of advantages, as is usual on such occasions; and ordering the fortifications of Worcester to be further strengthened, and Fort Royal, the principal citadel on the eastern side of the city, thoroughly stored with ordnance and munitions of war, his Majesty held on the 26th of August, four days after his arrival, a rendezvous of his partisans with great state and rejoicings in a large meadow on the river, called Pitchcroft; and was there joined by the principal nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood.

All this seemed prosperous and promising enough: on the very same day however, the Royal Manifesto was publicly burnt in London by order of the Lord Mayor, and to throw as much odium on that document as possible, it was consigned to destruction by the hands of the common hangman; and

another issued in its stead, wherein Charles Stuart was denounced as a Traitor and a Public Enemy.

Two days later, on the 28th of August, 1651, General Cromwell who had deliberately followed the Royal Army step by step from Scotland, gathering together his detachments as he advanced like a skilful fowler who had set his nets abroad, appeared in force before the fated city ; and took up a position on a low range of hills on its eastern face, still known by its ancient name of "Perry Wood," and without an hour's loss of time began to adopt all those measures which strategy and prudence suggested.

His light troops were immediately pushed forward and drove the outlying parties of the enemy into the town : strong Posts were established all round its eastern face for their support, and before nightfall the place was fully invested.

On the following morning a detachment of infantry and some light guns were despatched down the river under the command of Colonel Thornton, with instructions to examine carefully the various fords between head-quarters and the little town of Upton, which as before stated had been occupied by the Royalists ; and in the event of the river proving unfordable, to coalesce with Major-General Lambert, who was advancing from Evesham with a regiment of heavy horse and three troops of dra-

goons, and endeavour to carry the Post of Upton by a *coup-de-main*; the Commander-in-Chief having resolved if able, to cross the Severn and take the enemy in reverse.

Accordingly Colonel Thornton marched out of camp without beat of drum long before the dawn of day, carrying out his instructions with reference to the examination of the river communications as he advanced; and it soon became evident that these, always uncertain and sometimes dangerous, had now become impassable in consequence of the sudden rise of the river; a phenomenon of very common occurrence with the waters of the Severn during the autumnal and winter rains.

In this state of affairs, our hero making a flank movement united his detachment with General Lambert's, and the combined *corps d'armée* pushed rapidly on to Upton in the hopes of surprising the enemy at that important Post.

But here again they were disappointed; for the Royalists had partially destroyed the bridge and removed all the boats to the opposite bank, entrenching themselves strongly at the same time within and around the old church of Upton, which being on rising ground, completely enfiladed both the approaches of the bridge and the fleet of boats which were anchored a little above it.

A closer examination however showed, that the

enemy with their usual carelessness had only destroyed *some* of the arches of the bridge, and even these were still connected by their parapets with the unbroken ones ; but to assault a strong position over such an approach seemed so desperate an undertaking, that the Major-general declined accepting the responsibility of the step, and despatched an aide-de-camp to head-quarters with explanations of his dilemma, and requesting further instructions.

Meanwhile the troops piled arms and remained under cover during this period of inactivity, occasionally disturbed by a musket shot thrown across more in bravado than with serious intent by the Royalists.

In the course of some three weary hours, Cromwell arrived at the head of a small escort of his "Ironsides," and his very presence seemed to animate the soldiery with an indescribable feeling of hope and expectation ; so certain, so unerring, had his Leading been in a long course of severe service.

Joining Lambert, he proceeded at once to reconnoitre the Royalist position, and his practised eye saw at a glance the serious situation of affairs, though the expression of his countenance did not altogether imply hopelessness.

"To storm across yonder parapets, Lambert," he said, "I agree with you would be a most desperate

business; but if we could arrange a diversion at the same moment and so divide the enemy's fire, we *might* I think succeed in our object."

"But I can find no materials for a diversion, sir," replied Lambert.

"Look again," was the brief reply; and he pointed to a very large flat-bottomed boat such as are used in the salmon fishery, which was moored to stakes about two-thirds of the way across the river.

It had apparently been left there either in the hurry of operations by the Royalists, or because they felt confident that although it had not been brought over and secured on their side with the other fishing boats of the neighbourhood, yet as it was separated from the opposite bank by a great expanse of water, and was moreover completely enfiladed by their fire, it could not by any mischance be made available against them.

"That boat," said the Commander-in-Chief aloud, so that the Soldiery might hear him; "that boat would carry fifty men easily, and if we could secure it the day would be ours, as we would then assail by parapet and water at the same time!"

He paused, and turning his earnest eyes slowly from countenance to countenance (for the men were now crowding eagerly round their favourite General) he continued—

"I would never *order* another on a duty which I admit to be desperate; but the capture of this position is of vital importance to our future operations, and I feel that by God's Providence a strong swimmer might reach yonder vessel."

Around him stood veterans who had faced death with rapture on many a storied field; to whom the dust of battle was the very breath of their nostrils; and who had proved on divers occasions that they had been elevated by religious zeal to a condition above all human weaknesses.

And yet so strangely is our mortal nature constituted, those very men now shrank, or rather perhaps held back from a sacrifice, which to their experienced understandings was neither mitigated by hope or justified by necessity; for it was clear, that even if a swimmer could be found of sufficient strength, nerve, and skill to master the raging flood, his object even then might be defeated, as his destruction was almost certain by the rifles of the enemy. Here then was a dilemma which rarely enters into Military Elements, and which is generally held to be objectionable; but it was the Age of Independent Opinions; and indeed one of the most curious mental phenomena of the period was, that the very Agencies that seemed raised by fanaticism *theoretically beyond the control of argument*, required when "Action" was the word

the calmest and clearest appeals to their *reasoning powers* before they could be put into movement.

Such at all events were the predominating sentiments of those solemn and egotistic warriors; and so, an expressive silence fell on the armed groups, and a cloud darkened the rugged features of the Child of Destiny as he turned aside in disappointment, and gazed abstractedly on the Wild Torrent which swept defiantly past his feet.

Did the turmoil which raged on its surface, whirling here in eddies, struggling there against under-currents, and subsiding anon helplessly before the irresistible pressure of succeeding waves, seem to him a just reflex of those Generous Aspirations which at certain periods stir the Hearts of Men to bursting, and which however well-meaning and well-defined at the outset, when once cast loose on the troubled waters of Society, sometimes lose their Individuality, oftener master their Riders, and generally merge into the senseless stream of Popular and Dangerous Agitation; and so becoming mingled and overpowered by Principles foreign to their Origin and opposite to their Intentions, are carried headlong into the vortex of Anarchy, and swept, maligned and misunderstood, into unmourned but still undeserved destruction?

Suddenly the silence was broken—

“Let this be the portion of Jonathan, the son of



Grimbold!" exclaimed a deep voice, and the clash of armour rang loud and cheerily as our old acquaintance the Adjutant sprang from his charger, and began hastily to divest himself of his garments.

A stern hum of admiration broke from the Soldiery, and Cromwell cried aloud in irrepressible enthusiasm—

"The Lord has heard my prayer, and a champion has been raised up for Israel!"

However, the Commander-in-Chief's habitual prudence by no means forsook him at this exciting moment, and whatever may have been his confidence in the Agency of Providence, he took at the same time all those precautions which Human Experience recommends. He sought out the best place from which the Adventurer ought to start, suggesting that it should be a good deal higher up on their side of the river than the point aimed at, in order to make allowances for the force of the stream; and gave orders to the artillery to open on the riflemen opposite, by way of diversion during the attempt.

In a few minutes more the Adjutant had made his preparations, and divested himself of all his clothes and accoutrements, keeping only his long riding-cloak loosely on his shoulders for the purposes of warmth and decorum; and as he advanced

to the brink of the river, his gigantic figure, herculean proportions, and resolute countenance, seemed well-matched against the powerful element which swept foaming on its unruly and destructive course. When close to the hanging bank, he turned with a slow step and grave bearing to Cromwell, as he stood surrounded by his Staff and a crowd of the Soldiery, and addressed him in earnest tones.

There was neither boastfulness in his manner or pretension in his words, or any of the vanity, vindictiveness, and dogmatism, which often clouded his reason and alloyed his sentiments on ordinary occasions; and he spoke modestly, like one conscious of having done his duty to the best of his ability, and desirous therefore of leaving behind him an unsoiled reputation. Nor did he attempt to delude himself into the belief, that the danger he was once more about to face for the Good Cause was less imminent than it seemed; for it might be gathered from the appeal he made to his old Commander, that he viewed it as certain destruction. The scene indeed was both touching and suggestive, and the most sceptical as well as the most aristocratic of observers, must have acknowledged the sublime force of Religious Enthusiasm; for this rude warrior was but a fair sample of the workings of that Fiery Principle which had elevated common

men into heroes, and made them in the long run, albeit untaught and inexperienced in the beginning, as wise in Council as they were resistless in the Field.

"General," said the Adjutant, in a calm tone, "it is now nine years since I abandoned the Homestead which is always dear to English hearts. My way of life up to that time had fallen amongst the humble, the peaceful, and the contented ; and in my roughest dreams I never could have imagined, that the clash of armour and the neigh of the war-horse would have become unto me even as the voice of the bride on the bridal morn. But such was the Will of a Just and Gracious God ! I had tilled the earth in humility, and worshipped the Almighty according to my own lights ; but there came, as is known to you all, a dreary change over the Land, and the voice of the Tyrant was heard, demanding unlawful tribute of the Freeborn and threatening penalties unto the Nonconformists who spurned the ceremonials of the Scarlet Woman.

"I hesitated not one moment !" he continued, rising suddenly into wild enthusiasm, "for the Grace of the Most High had fallen upon me, and a Voice came unto me in the dark hours of the night, crying, 'Jonathan, son of Grimbold, gird up thy loins for the Cause of thy God and thy Country, and hasten thee into the Battle of the Saints, even unto Ramoth Gilead !' And forth-

with I sold my substance, bought me a horse and armour, turned away for ever from the happy Home of my fathers, and joined thee, Oliver, at Huntingdon."

He paused in deep emotion, for under that rugged exterior throbbed a warm and tender heart; and Cromwell broke in hastily and heartily with—

"Thou didst, thou didst!—the very first! And on many a gallant field, and through many a hard and desperate campaign, thou hast proved thyself the truest, bravest, and most disinterested of my children!"

"Say on!" shouted the Independent, his deep-set eyes and rugged countenance lighting up with martial fire and mystic sentiment, "Say on!"

"And," continued Cromwell, becoming in his turn excited with the theme, "at that dread juncture, when the hearts of the valiant began to sink, and the fiat of Justice was trembling unredeemed in the Balance, thou, Jonathan, rose superior to all considerations save those of Duty, and wert faithful even unto Death. Believe me then, Comrade and Brother, that it has been my pride and happiness to acknowledge ever, that thou hast been unto me, from the beginning even unto this present time, as a Shield on the Battle Field, as a Wall of Iron against the Scorners!"

“And *why* have I been all these things unto thee, Oliver?” replied the Independent, stretching out his manly arm and grasping Cromwell’s hand. “Because it was borne into my mind from the first, that thou wert a Chosen Vessel predestined to lift up the Fallen Banner, and become a Leader, yea, a Chieftain in Israel ! Therefore, if it be *His* Will that my soul should this day stand at the Judgment Seat, say thou again unto the Saints, and unto the dear Remnant that dwell in yonder peaceful valley, for they will hearken unto *thy* voice when *mine* is still, that Jonathan, the son of Grimbold, died as he lived, *a labourer worthy of the Hire !*”

So saying the stern Enthusiast wrung his Great Leader’s hand, waved a “Farewell !” to his comrades, dashed his cloak on the ground, and plunged resolutely into the angry flood.

At first so great was the force of the current that it completely overwhelmed the Adventurer, carrying him headlong down with the tide ; but it soon became apparent, that his extraordinary strength added to great skill as a swimmer, would give him the mastery over the dangerous element he had had the temerity to defy ; and presently he began to rise with the swell, lay bye in the eddy, and strike boldly out as he floated on the crest of the foaming waves, like an experienced and determined rider ; ever giving his efforts a

slanting direction towards the object of his exertions.

From both shores his perilous course was marked with interest and admiration ; but as he neared the boat, his comrades observed with bated breath small silvery ripples break and fade away on the surface of the waters, in due succession to sharp rifle reports as the enemy's balls fell around the swimmer on every side.

But as if bearing a charmed life, he continued to glide through the path of death unscathed, and in a few minutes more the goal was reached, the race was won ! and the Republicans hailed the result with loud acclamations.

With admirable prudence the Adjutant was now observed resting himself behind the boat, keeping it between himself and the enemy's fire, before he commenced the second and more difficult part of his undertaking ; which was to release the boat from its moorings, and carry it slanting-wise under the arches of the bridge to the opposite bank.

In this however, he calculated on being assisted greatly by the current ; for as we before explained, the boat so often alluded to was moored some 200 yards above the bridge ; so that he would in fact have to run the gauntlet for that short distance only, as he would soon be under the cover of the broken arches ; from which point a little more

exertion would carry it beyond the line of fire. And now, as all eyes were watching for the next move in this bold enterprise, the Adjutant was seen suddenly to cut the moorings of the boat with a sharp knife with which he had provided himself, spring into her, and commence plying the oars with superhuman vigour.

This was the crisis of his fate ; for as his massive and colossal person became fully exposed to view, the enemy opened so heavy a fire on it, that it seemed utterly impossible that he should escape destruction ; in fact, it became literally a race for life and death, with the chances much against the undaunted rower ; for the musket-balls fell thick as hail all round about, and it was very soon clear from the flying of splinters that they were even riddling the boat itself. Notwithstanding which, he continued his exertions with unabated resolution, and as the perturbed Current was cleft into spray by each stroke of his herculean arm, and the boat strained and quivered under the antagonistic impulses which enveloped and controlled her motion, it seemed as if Indomitable Will would once more overcome Nature's wildest opposition ; and very soon, as he won his way through the vanquished element and the distance between his important charge and the dropping fire of the

riflemen increased, those hopes received a surer confirmation.

But as he approached nearer, his comrades marked that blood was streaming from his person. Yet he did not lessen his earnest efforts; still the oars flashed through the foaming waters; still the little bark crested wave after wave in progressive triumph; and presently it drew under cover of the broken arches, and then shot the bridge in safety midst the enthusiastic cheering of his friends. Emerging on the lower side, his zeal appeared to be crowned with success; for he had gradually brought the huge machine within the influence of an eddy, which unaided, was drifting it towards the friendly shore. Then only were those manly and devoted labours relaxed, and the Independent, waving his hand in reply to the anxious shouts of inquiry as to his own condition, sank exhausted into the bottom of the boat.

The utmost excitement now prevailed among the Soldiery: many rushing into the water to secure the boat and assist their brave comrade, while the General himself shouted frantically for a surgeon.

So extreme in fact was Cromwell's grief and anxiety about his faithful follower, that he could with difficulty be prevented from precipitating himself into the water; his feelings indeed being once



refused, as usual, completely mastered him, and in the most touching tones he called aloud to the wounded man to speak or make some little sign, that his *father's* heart might be relieved and gladdened.

But no sign or answer came : the boat glided silently and mournfully on like some phantom bier propelled by invisible powers ; and the sad surging of the eddy sounded not unlike the last solemn struggles of a departing spirit.

At last it touched the shore ; and then was seen a sight, which made eyes that had stared Danger out of countenance on many a dusty field and deadly breach grow dim with Sorrow, but at the same time conveyed a lesson of Simple and Sublime Faith that made every heart beat high in Emulation !

In the bottom of the boat, the gigantic form of Adjutant Grimbold, or as he better loved to be styled, of Jonathan the Upright, was stretched at full length, dead, bloody, and pierced with many a gaping wound ; but a smile of stern enthusiasm still irradiated his honest features, and he held in his massive hand the well-known pocket Bible which had accompanied him through all the troubles of his turbulent career, and which he invariably carried carefully secured in an oil-skin cover suspended from his neck.

It was wide open at the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, while his thumb pressed—nay, in the approaching rigidity of death, actually indented—the 21st verse, suggestive at once of the ruling Principle of his Conduct, his simple Egotism, and his pure and unswerving Belief—

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

As these circumstances developed themselves, nothing could exceed the regrets of the Soldiery, with whom the Adjutant had always been a great favourite from the kindness of his disposition and the fervour of his religious convictions. The officers too, joined sincerely in these demonstrations, for they too knew that the turbulence which he sometimes manifested proceeded from disinterested, though perhaps misplaced, zeal; while no man, even in that Heroic Epoch, had surpassed him in dauntless valour on the field, and self-sacrificing devotion to the Cause of Freedom and Religion as understood by himself.

He was in fact the Type of that Religious Enthusiasm which pervaded the Republican Armies of that day; and which spurred them on to achievements which all impartial Englishmen, whatever their personal bias might be with reference to the

Principle involved in the quarrel between the Court and the Commons, have hailed with patriotic pride and well-founded approbation.

Meanwhile, Cromwell (who, though he had exhibited in the beginning more sorrow than any one else, was the very first to return to the affair in hand) lost no time in calling aloud for volunteers to man the captured boat, and tow it up their side of the river to the point from which the Adjutant had started, in order to make the same allowance for the current which he had done.

"Our brother has fallen," was his curt observation, "like a true man in the Good Cause; let us then reap the harvest *he* has sown, lest his life-blood be but as a barren sacrifice."

And so eager were the Soldiery to revenge their comrade that they rushed forward *en masse* at the summons, creating a good deal of confusion by the movement.

The Commander-in-Chief therefore immediately ordered the leading sections to be told off for these duties; and finally, about fifty men being arranged in the boat under the orders of Colonel Thornton, it pushed off for the opposite bank in the midst of much cheering; while Major-General Lambert advanced to the attack across the broken bridge, at the head of a picked column of light troops.

Both attacks were to be directed eventually

against the same position—viz., the old Church of Upton, which had been strongly garrisoned and barricaded by the Royalists and defended with earthworks hastily thrown up; but the line of action of the water party, was diverted in the first instance, to the seizure of the small fleet of boats which were moored opposite just under that edifice.

Lambert's column under the cool handling of that excellent officer, won their way from parapet to parapet with wonderful determination and less loss than might have been expected, (for the Royalists were evidently flurried at the double attack which had so suddenly been improvised), and gained the mainland just as Thornton's volunteers were jumping into the boats they had contrived to reach under the muzzles of the enemy's riflemen.

No time was lost in despatching five or six boats back to the left bank of the river for reinforcements, or in combining the two attacks under one head; and before the disheartened Royalists had time to retire within their outworks, General Lambert had already re-formed his troops, and was moving to assault their last position.

A desperate struggle immediately ensued in and around an Edifice not intended for antagonistic purposes in its construction, though probably like

most of its fellows, it had witnessed more pugnacious virulence and animosity than the most celebrated fortifications of either modern or ancient times.

The Royalists made a gallant stand indeed, seeming to awake to the great importance of the stakes at issue, when it was almost too late ; nothing however could withstand the zeal and impetuosity of the Republicans, fighting as they were under the eyes of their favourite general, and stirred almost to madness at the touching death of their comrade. And so after a brief but vigorous struggle, the entire position of Upton was carried ; and the Royalists, notwithstanding the spirited efforts of their brave commander, Colonel Sedley, fell back on Powick in the utmost disorder, and a feeling of apprehension about the security of their right flank, which greatly influenced their future movements.

END OF VOL. II.









